Ruba'iyats of Two Great Female Persian Sufi Poets
Mahsati Ganjavi & Jahan Khatun

Translation & Introduction Paul Smith

The *ruba'i* is perhaps the oldest form in Persian Sufi Poetry. In its four lines, most rhyming, can be found the wisdom, suffering, love and mysticism of two of its greatest female exponents of Sufi Spirituality and ordinary human love, despair and grief. Mahsati Ganjavi's (1098-1185) lived in Ganjeh when Sultan Sanjar reigned and as was a poet at his court she would have known Anvari. She was a court, dervish and ribald poet. She knew Nizami (she is said to have been buried in his mausoleum) and Omar Khayyam... and like Omar composed only in the *ruba'i* form and must be considered not only a master of that form but also to have helped to revolutionize it. She was an influence on perhaps Persia's greatest female poet Jahan Khatun. Included in the Introduction are the life of Mahsati and a history of the *ruba'i* and examples by its greatest exponents. Selected Bibliography included. Jahan Khatun was the daughter of the king of one of Shiraz's most turbulent times (14th century) Masud Shah; pupil and lifelong friend of the world's greatest mystical, lyric poet, Hafiz; the object of crazed desire by (among others) Iran's greatest satirist, Obeyd Zakani. Her *Divan* is four times the size of Hafiz's and contains many hundreds of *ruba'is*.. The correct rhyme-structure is kept as well as the beauty and meaning of these often mystical nd sometimes sad and griefstricken poems... Introduction on her Life, Times & Poetry and there is a unique Preface by herself. Selected Bibliography. Large Format "7 x 10" 273 pages.

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Paul Smith is a poet, author and translator of many books of Sufi poets of the Persian, Arabic, Urdu, and other languages including Hafiz, Sadi, Nizami, Rumi, 'Attar, Sana'i, Jahan Khatun, Obeyd Zakani, Nesimi, Kabir, Anvari, Ansari, Jami, Khayyam, Rudaki, Yunus Emre, Lalla Ded, Mu'in and others, as well as poetry, fiction, plays, biographies, children's books, screenplays.
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The Form, Function & History of the *Ruba'i*

Most scholars of Persian Poetry agree that the *ruba'i* is the most ancient Persian poetic form that is original to this language. All other classical forms including the *ghazal, kasida, masnavi* etc., they say originated in Arabic literature and the metres employed in them were in Arabic poetry in the beginning. The *ruba'i* is a poem of four lines in which usually the first, second and fourth lines rhyme and sometimes with the *radif* (refrain) after the rhyme words... sometimes all four rhyme. It is composed in metres called *'ruba'i'* metres. Each *ruba'i* is a separate poem in itself and should not be regarded as a part of a long poem as was created by FitzGerald when he translated those he attributed to Omar Khayyam (only 10% of Omar's poems were by him).

The *ruba'i* (as its name implies) is two couplets *(beyts)* in length, or four lines *(misra)* as stated above. The *ruba'i* is different in metre from all those used in Arabic poetry that preceded it. How was this metre invented? The accepted story of Rudaki (d. 941 A.D.) creating this new *metre* of the *hazaj* group which is essential to the *ruba'i* is as follows: one New Year's Festival he happened to be strolling in a garden where some children played with nuts and one threw a walnut along a groove in a stick and it jumped out then rolled back again creating a sound and the children shouted with delight in imitation, *'Ghaltan ghaltan hami ravad ta bun-i gau,' (Ball, ball, surprising hills... to end of a brave try).* Rudaki immediately recognised in the line's metre a new invention and by the repetition four times of the *rhyme* he had quickly created the *ruba'i*... and

is considered the first master of this form and the father of classical Persian Poetry.

Shams-e Qais writing two hundred years later about this moment of poetic history and the effect of this new form on the population said the following... "This new poetic form fascinated all classes, rich and poor, ascetic and drunken outsider*/rend/*, all wanted to participate in it... the sinful and the good both loved it; those who were so ignorant they couldn't make out the difference between poetry and prose began to dance to it; those with dead hearts who couldn't tell the difference between a donkey braying and reed's wailing and were a thousand miles away from listening to a lute's strumming, offered up their souls for a *ruba'i*. Many a young girl cloistered away, out of passion for the song of a *ruba'i* broke down the doors and their chastity's walls; many matrons from love for a *ruba'i* let loose the braids of their self-restraint."

The *ruba'i* should be eloquent, spontaneous and ingenious. In the *ruba'i* the first three lines serve as an introduction to the fourth that should be sublime, subtle or pithy and clever. As can be seen from the quote by Shams-e Qais above the *ruba'i* immediately appealed to all levels of society and has done so ever since. The nobility and royalty enjoyed those in praise of them and the commoner enjoyed the short, simple homilies... the ascetic and mystic could think upon epigrams of deep religious fervour and wisdom; the reprobates enjoyed the subtle and amusing satires and obscenities... and for everyone, especially the cloistered girls and old maids, many erotic and beautiful love poems to satisfy any passionate heart.

Every major and most minor poet of Persia composed at some times in the *ruba'i* form. I will now attempt a short history of the finest exponents and innovators of this form... many of course would have had an influence on Mahsati, (then a brief look at what Mahsati brought to this form)... until three hundred years after her... ending with Jami (1414-1493) and the end of Persian Classical Literature. A fuller exploration of this subject, with a much greater selection of poems and sources can be discovered in my... *The Ruba'iyat: A World Anthology*.

HANZALAH (Mid. 9th century). It seems that Hanzalah of Baghis (a district north-west of Herat) was inspired by Abbas of Merv's example and began to compose poems in Persian. 'Awfi says of his poetry, 'the graceful flow of his expression is like the water of Paradise and his couplets are fresh like cool wine and likeable like the north wind'. His poems became so popular that his were probably the first to be collected into a *Divan*, but unfortunately like many of these early poets, only a few fragments remain. In what some scholars say is the first *ruba'i* (but of a different metre than that discovered by Rudaki and in which most *ruba'is* were composed after that)... Hanzalah warns his sweetheart it is futile to throw rue-seed on fire to avoid the influence of the evil eye, an old superstition.

Though my sweetheart rue-seed on fire
threw
so that from the evil eye no hurt would
accrue:

what is the use of fire and rue-seed to one

whose face is like fire... mole, like seed of

rue?

MANSUR AL-HALLAJ (859-922). Mansur al-Hallaj was a Perfect Master and a poet who like Jahan was born in or near Shiraz, Persia... a writer and teacher of Sufism most famous for his self-proclaimed divinity in his poetry and for his execution for heresy at the hands of the Abbasid rulers. Although Hallaj was born in Persia and was of Persian descent, he wrote all of his works in Arabic. He possibly met Rudaki (to follow).

He married and made a pilgrimage to Mecca, stayed for one year, facing the mosque, in fasting and total silence. After his stay at the city, he traveled extensively and wrote and taught along the way. He traveled as far as India and Central Asia gaining many followers, many of whom accompanied him on his second and third trips to Mecca. After this period of travel, he settled down in the capital of Baghdad.

During his early lifetime he was a disciple of Junaid and Amr al-Makki, but was later rejected by them both. Among other Sufis, Hallaj was an anomaly. Many Sufi masters felt that it was inappropriate to share his inner experiences with the masses, yet Mansur Hallaj openly did so in his writings and through his teachings. He began to make enemies, and the rulers saw him as a threat. This was exacerbated by times when he would fall into trances that he attributed to being in the

presence of God. During one of these trances, he would utter *Anal-Haqq* literally meaning, "I am the Absolute Truth", which was taken to mean that he was claiming to be God. In another controversial statement, Hallaj claimed: "There is nothing wrapped in my turban but God," and he would point to his cloak and say, "There is nothing inside my cloak except God."

These utterances led him to a long trial, and subsequent imprisonment for eleven years in a Baghdad prison. In the end, he was tortured and publicly crucified (in some accounts he was beheaded and his hands and feet were cut off) by the Abbasid rulers for what they deemed 'theological error threatening the security of the state.' Many accounts tell of Hallaj's calm demeanor even while he was being tortured, and indicate that he forgave those who had executed him. He was executed on March 26, 922. It is said that while he was savagely tortured before he was killed he kept calling out: *"Anal Haqq!"* It is also reported that after his body was burnt and the ashes thrown into the Tigris River they spelt out the words *"Anal Haqq!"* His influence on all Sufis, be they poets or not, who have come after him, cannot be overestimated.

I'm the One I love, the One I love is

me,

we are two spirits that live... in one

body.

If you see me, then... you see that One,

and, if you see that One... both, you

see.

A secret, hidden for a long time, is told to

you...

from the dark of night, from you, a day dawns

too:

the veil of the heart over its secret mystery is

you,

it would never have been sealed if not for you,

too.

*

SHIBLI (d.946). A pupil and disciple of Junaid of Baghdad and one who had met Mansur Hallaj, Al-Shibli is one of the famous Sufis. He was originally from Khurasan. In the book *Rawdat al-jannat,* and in other biographies, many mystical poems and sayings have been recorded of him. Ansari has said: "The first person to speak in symbols was Dhu al-Nun of Egypt. Then came Junaid and he systematized this science, extended it, and wrote books on it. Al-Shibli, in his turn, took it to the pulpit." He died in 846 at the age of 87. He composed his poems in Arabic.

I will put upon me a fine robe of patience...

keeping awake at night for longer makes sense.

I am not yet willing to be patient completely...

a bit at a time soul I'll try bring, to my defence.

ABU SHAKUR (b. 915). Abu Shakur of Balkhi appeared before both Shahid and Rudaki and is said to have from both of them 'carried off the ball of excellence'. He was a bi-lingual poet and the earliest poet to use the *mutakarib* metre in his epic *masnavi Afarin-Nama* composed in 948. He claimed he couldn't speak a lie to his beloved, because that 'would tie his neck into a yoke'. His style is simple, some of his poems are like jingles, or child-like. Perhaps he was the originator of the *ruba'i* or perhaps he too like Shahid (to follow) got the *ruba'i* metre off Rudaki (to follow)... they all being alive at the same time.

From stabs of grief for you, I am laid low;

bowed down by separation's burden, I go.

I washed hands of your wiles and tricks...

none had moods, whims like yours I know.

*

SHAHID (d. 937). Shahid of Balkh was mourned in a poem by his friend the great Rudaki (next). He was said to be 'of excellent mind, a spirited conversationalist, with high opinions and a scholar'. The melancholy that is in some of his poems meant that he was eventually called, 'the pessimist of the century'. He was said to be one of the great philosophers of his time. In the following *ruba'i* probably composed after those of his friend Rudaki he laments over the ruins of Tus in Khurasan that had been devastated by invading hordes.

Last night by the ruins of Tus I passed

by,

seeing owl sitting in place of peacock saw

I.

I asked, "What do you know of these ruins?"

It answered, "News is, O no... I could

cry!"

*

RUDAKI was born in the village of Rudak (hence his pen-name or *takhallus)* in Transoxania in 858 A.D. The historian 'Awfi says that Rudaki was blind from birth but other historians of the time disagree with him asking how one could create such images of nature if he did not at one time see. Others say that a ruler later in his life held red-hot iron rods before his eyes and blinded him when he refused to compose poetry for him.

First a wandering 'dervish' poet he later served at the court of the Samanids of Bokhara. Rudaki was so intelligent and like Hafiz of Shiraz (1320-1392) blessed with such a fine memory that by the age of eight he had memorized all of the *Koran.* He is said to have had a happy childhood spending much of his time listening to stories and songs and learning about his people's ways and aspirations. He began to compose poems expressing their desires and his own. He had a beautiful voice and was a

fine musician and because of this he mixed freely with other minstrels and with musicians and dancers. His lute teacher was the famous Bakhtiar and he eventually excelled his master. He travelled around the Tajikistan highlands with his master, singing and creating songs. When Bakhtiar died and left him his famous lute he continued wandering and singing until his fame reached the capital... Bokhara.

Nasr ibn Ahmad summoned him to his court and he prospered there amassing great wealth. He had 200 slaves in his retinue... and 400 camels carried his belongings when he travelled. He was commissioned and paid 40,000 *dirhams* to translate *Kalila and Dimna* (a collection of fables originating in India and translated into Arabic in 750) into Persian verse *(masnavi...* rhyming couplets). This work, plus most of the reported 1,300,000 couplets (some say 130,000) that he composed (his *Divan)* have not survived the ravages of time. There remain only 1000 couplets... 52 *kasidas, ghazals* and *ruba'is.* Of his epic masterpieces we have nothing beyond a few lines. In 937 he fell out of favour at court (perhaps he was blinded at this time) after the death of the prime-minister who had supported him. His life ended in abject poverty, forgotten by the world at that time. Rudaki died in Rudak in 941. His poetry is about the passage of time, old age, death, fortune's fickleness, importance of the matters of the heart, the need to be happy. Although he praised kings, nobles and heroes... his greatest love was knowledge and experience.

With what one has, be satisfied,

live freely:

by any formality do not be tied...

live freely!
Don't pity self if others seem richer:
many more are by fortune tried.
Live, freely!

No sun blazes in this world, more than the face
of Yours!
No light graces this world more than that grace
of Yours!
Let not a one ever be as spoiled as I am by You,
each day may not any face seen, be even a trace
of Yours!

FIRDAUSI (941-1021). Next, in our tracing of the *ruba'i* through the words of Persia's greatest exponents of the poetic arts, we come to Iran's national poet, known throughout the land and many others as the creator of the 60,000 couplets he called 'Book of Kings' or *Shah-nama*. He was a lot less prolific than Iran's previous other 'immortal', Rudaki, and occasionally gave up the *masnavi* form of different rhyming couplets and composed in the *ruba'i* form. Born the year that Rudaki died, in Tus, the ancient city in Khorasan, Abdul Qasim Mansur would use the *takhallus* or pen-name of Firdousi (Paradise) calling himself that after the name of a garden his father looked after... being a small but proud landowner. His *Shah-nama* took thirty years to complete and he was only paid 20,000

dirhams of the 50,000 promised to him by Sultan Mahmud and he bitterly wrote satires on that ruler in his old age. The following *ruba'i* was possibly composed about the Sultan in earlier, happier times...

Showing his servants much kindness
last night,
he acted like a human being, no less,
last night.
Faults forgiving, taking arm, laughing
loudly, it... around his neck he did press
last night.

ABU SAID (948-1049) was the famous Perfect Master who composed over 400 *ruba'is*. He is considered to be one of the founders of Sufi poetry and was a major influence on the *ruba'i* and most poets that followed, especially Sana'i, Attar and Rumi and Hafiz.

This body was all tears that were by my eyes
shed,
in this love for You one must have no form or
head.
What is this love? Not one trace of me stays!
Who is the lover, ever since I've become... the
Beloved?

Instead of sleep there is much water
in these eyes,
I'm so impatient to have You... here,
in these eyes:
I'm told: sleep, in dreams I'll see You;
but, they don't know no sleep's there,
in my eyes.

*

IBN SINA (981-1037). Abu 'Ali Ibn Sina (or as he is called in the west... Avicenna) born some forty years after Firdousi in Bukhara died about twenty-five years after him, living only for fifty-six years even though he was one of the greatest creative exponents of the great arts of *Koranic* knowledge, arithmetic and algebra, medicine, surgery and philosophy and wrote poems in Arabic and Persian so much so that that some *ruba'is* he composed were later to be ascribed to Omar Khayyam. He was hounded as a heretic and worse, but all the known world is still trying to catch up to what he discovered. His *kasida* on the human soul is considered one of the greatest Persian poems of all time. His *ruba'is* are some of the most honest and direct of all time.

I was asked by a person, "Tell me, what is
the Absolute?"
Beyond description and imaginable bliss...

the Absolute!
One cannot speak of why It is or what It is:
only the Absolute can really say, "This... is
the Absolute!"

*

BABA TAHIR ('The Naked')... approx. 990-1065, was a great God-intoxicated soul *(mast)* and possibly a *Qutub* (Perfect Master) who composed about 120 known *ruba'i* in a simpler metre than the usual *'hazaj'* metre. His simple, mystical poems that he would sing while wandering naked throughout the land had a profound influence on Sufis and dervishes and other *ruba'i* composers, especially Abu Said.

I am a kalandar... a drunken outsider, a
vagabond,
on such a one like me life has no ties, no
bond:
during day I wander aimlessly... at night
my pillow's a stone... my lamp the moon
beyond.

*

BABA KUHI... d.1051. A Perfect Master poet who like Jahan lived in the fabled city of Shiraz. His tomb is on a hill outside that city and it was

at that tomb that the greatest of all Persian mystical love poets Hafiz kept vigil for forty nights and received from this Master the gift of poetry, immortality and 'his heart's delight'.

The work isn't finished without love's fire,
my dear:
heart isn't perfect unless consumed entire,
my dear.
Burn day and night like moth and candle:
day is Beloved's face, night hair to admire,
my dear.

Ever since the First Day as drunken lover
I've come
with the winecup in hand... until forever,
I've come.
I am lover, drunkard, worshipper of wine:
do not blame me for like this I was before
I've come.

ANSARI... 1006-1089. The great mystical poet Khwaja Abdullah Ansari who passed from this world 1089 in Herat is most known for his biographical dictionary on saints and masters and his much loved collection of inspiring prayers, the *Munajat*. His *ruba'is* appear throughout his works.

From loving you, without soul and heart
I've become,
twisted like your curls, that play a part,
I've become.
No, a mistake: now that by love's power
I'm beyond both worlds, the Sweetheart
I've become.

AL-GHAZZALI (1058-1111). Mohammad al-Ghazzali the famous theologian was born in Tus in 1058 and after his many extraordinary expositions on the knowledge of the spiritual path, Islamic philosophy was never the same. He has been called 'The Proof of Islam' and the learned Suyuti once said of him, "If there could have been another prophet after Mohammed it would surely have been al-Ghazzali!" His *Alchemy of Happiness* is of course his most popular work but he was also a composer of a number of fine *ruba'is*.

O Being's Essence... is there one being
You are not in?
You are no place, but there is no thing...
You are not in?
O You, not needing direction or place...
what, is Your Place? Is a place missing,
You are not in?

OMAR KHAYYAM... (died 1132). Of the 1000 or so *ruba'is* attributed to him only about ten percent are now considered to be his. More famous in Iran as an astronomer and mathematician his nihilistic and hedonistic philosophy in his *ruba'is* meant that his poems were never really popular in his homeland.

Don't let your soul in sorrow's grasp be
pressed,
don't let your days be filled... with vain
unrest:
book, beloved's lips, meadow's edge don't
give up... even if the earth folds you in its
breast.

SANA'I... d. 1131. One of the most prolific and influential Sufi Master Poets of all time Sana'i composed many *ghazals, masnavis* and over 400 *ruba'is*. His long *masnavi* (rhyming couplets) mystical work *The Enclosed Garden of the Truth* is said to have had a profound influence on Rumi's composing his *Masnavi* and Sadi's his *Bustan* ('The Orchard').

Go to the winehouse, be a drunken lover
only:
there, wine and music and beloved order,

only.
Fill the large cup and before flagon of-wine
joyfully drink... speak sense to him or her
only.

MAHSATI (1098-1185). We know little of Mahsati Ganjavi's life except that she lived in Ganjeh where Sultan Sanjar reigned and as she was a poet at his court she would have known Anvari. She was a court, dervish and ribald poet. She knew Nizami (she is said to have been buried in his mausoleum) and Omar Khayyam... and like Omar composed only in the *ruba'i* form and must be considered not only a master of that form but also to have helped revolutionize it. She was an influence on perhaps Iran's greatest female poet Jahan Khatun of Shiraz and Iran's greatest satirist Obeyd Zakani. She was famous and also infamous for her liberated behaviour and is said to have had many affairs not only with the sultan who found her of interest when after he was about to mount his horse discovered a sudden fall of snow had covered the field and she composed for him the following *ruba'i* on the spot...

For you... Heaven has saddled Fortune's
steed
O sultan... and chosen you from all who
lead:
it spreads a silver sheet on the ground,
steed's gold-shod hooves... mud won't
impede.

ANVARI (d. 1187). A court poet of the Seljik sultans. Jami composed a *ruba'i* where he names him along with Firdausi and Sadi as one of the 'three apostles' of Persian poetry. Mainly a court poet he was also an astrologer.

I spent many a night until morning wanting
you...
many happy days kissing your lips I had, it's
true:
now that you have gone, day and night I say,
"Day I meet beloved, let that night be happy
too!"

*

NIZAMI (d. 1208). Another Master Poet who is most famous for his six books in *masnavi* form: *The Treasury of the Mysteries, Layla and Majnun, Khrosrau and Shirin, The Seven Portraits* and his two books on Alexander. He also composed a *Divan* of approximately 20,000 couplets in *ghazals* and *ruba'is*... tragically only 200 couplets survive. His influence on Attar, Rumi, Sadi, Hafiz and Jami and all others that followed was profound.

Wine is the best thing of all consumed by
man,
find pure wine found in temple ruins if you

can:
as the world's a ruined place with nowhere
not ruined: be ruined, drunk, in the ruins O
man!

*

RUZBIHAN... d. 1210. This Sufi Perfect Master of Shiraz is better known for his Spiritual Diary... *The Unveiling of Secrets*. He wrote mainly in Arabic and his *rubai's* are few of his works in Persian.

Searching for the cup of Jamshid the world I
travelled:
I didn't rest a day... sleep never entered my
head.
When Jamshid's cup I heard by my Master
described,
that I myself was that world-seeing cup... I
realized.

*

ATTAR (d. 1230?). Farid ad-din Attar is the Perfect Master Poet who was the author of over forty books of poetry and prose including *The Conference of the Birds, The Book of God* (which he is said to have presented to Rumi when he met him) and *The Lives of the Saints*. Apart

from his many books in *masnavi* form he also composed many hundreds of mystical *ghazals* and *ruba'is*. He also changed the evolution of the *rūba'i* form by composing a long Sufi epic, the *Mukhtar-nama*, where each of 2088 *ruba'is* is connected by subject matter which Fitzgerald attempted to do with those he attributed to Omar Khayyam.

Heart, since you drank spiritual knowledge's
wine,
keep lips closed... don't sell any secrets of the
Divine.
Don't boil like mountain spring in difficulties:
if you sit, silently, You will become Ocean, so
fine.

In love with that One's face is this soul
of mine...
also that One's talking... is heart, whole,
of mine.
Full of precious treasures... heart and soul
of mine:
what to do, for locked... is tongue and jowl
of mine.

RUMI (1207-1273). In the almost two thousand *ruba'is* he composed Rumi expanded the range of this form of poetry from what came before him, in a number of directions... he simplified it back to the language and expression of the common people once again and also raised it to a height of thought never heard before and he also used it to serve a conscious spiritual purpose. Many of Rumi's *ruba'is* are simple and folksy and down to earth yet sublimity of thought and expression is in them.

Because of the conciseness of the form of the *ruba'i* Rumi did not get carried away with repetition and wordiness that is often to be found in his *ghazals* and his epic *Masnavi*. And so, in this short form Rumi was able to be profound without making the reader bored or tired, and into this restricted form he was able to jam an amazing array of concepts and profound sayings.

Although many of his *ruba'is* are conventional, many like those of Abu Said and 'Attar and others before him are about being penitent, piety, self-denial, the mystical symbol of wine and of course, divine love.

Rumi brought to the *ruba'i* a number of images that were not used before... which have a direct connection to the dervish dance or *dhikr*. Whirling and music can be discovered in quite a few of these poems and it is most likely that they were composed spontaneously while Rumi was in this ecstatic state...

When that One plays music I have to clap my
hands:
I was created crazy... I laugh at what dignity

demands.
I proved that One's heart, made my heart do
handstands,
and created me into whatever form that One
commands.

SADI (1210-1291). Sadi of Shiraz, a contemporary of Rumi who influenced him, was another Master Poet who expressed himself in the *ruba'i* form as well as hundreds of *ghazals* in his beautiful *Divan* that often also contained images from dervish dancing. Sadi was a great traveller who spent forty years on the road throughout the Middle-East, North Africa and India and many of the incidents he experienced he wrote down in his two most famous works when he finally returned to his beloved birth-place: The Rose Garden *(Gulistan)* and The Orchard *(Bustan)*.

Than anything else, to cure another's suffering
is better:
more, not less... other people one to be helping
is better.
Friend, in hands of my enemies don't leave me:
if I am to be dying, Your hand to me be killing,
is better.

I can't help it any more, I have to get up and
go:
even if the foe hits me with a sword... or an
arrow.
I will grab Friend's sleeve if I am able, this I
know...
if I can't I'll die at Friend's threshold when I
go.

KHAJU KERMANI (1281-1352). Born in Kerman he was the court poet in Baghdad then Yazd and eventually in Shiraz and knew Hafiz, Obeyd Zakani and Jahan Malek Khatun. He was accused of plagiarizing Sadi and authored five *masnavi* epics and hundreds of court and Sufi *ghazals* and *ruba'is*.

Our ecstasy and listening is no mere
fancy,
and this dance we do is not a game to
see:
say to the unknowing, "Ignorant ones,
any nonsense so drawn out would not
be!"

OBEYD ZAKANI (1300-1371) Persia's greatest satirist and social commentator of the classical period (some say of all time) he was most likely a teacher and friend of Hafiz and a strong influence upon him and a lover of Jahan. After moving from the court at Baghdad he spent many years in Shiraz as a court poet and court jester. His masterpiece epic poem *Cat and Mouse* is still fresh and his ribald and outright obscene stories and *ruba'is* influenced by Mahsati are still frowned upon by authorities in Iran. His mystical *ghazals* and *ruba'is* are now considered to be some of the most profound and revolutionary for the period.

I said... "The glorious face of God... is your face."
Answer: "True... straight as my form full of grace!"
I said: "On your arse is no hair... not even a trace!"
You: "Such kindness, your describing of that place."

From the affairs of this world... I will be withdrawing,
to wine and winehouse of Master I'll be going:
so that people drop their hands from me,
that I've gone insane all of them I will be telling!

HAFIZ (1320-1392). Persia's greatest exponent of the *ghazal* Hafiz became a Perfect Master *(Qutub),* was twice exiled from his beloved Shiraz for his criticism of rulers and false Sufi masters and hypocritical clergy. His *Divan* shows he composed in other forms including the *ruba'i* of which about 160 survive. As with his *ghazals,* his *ruba'is* are sometimes mystical and sometimes critical of the hypocrisy of his times.

To pound all the horizon from end to end in a mortar,
and the sky's nine arches with heart's blood to smear,
to be captive in prison... a hundred years and a year,
is better than being with a fool for a moment, I swear.

Your soul's completely covered me in deepest ecstasy;
I desired You, but grief was holding my heart tightly...
if, I am unable to find You in place one prays,
in the Winehouse of Love, Your lips... are my discovery.

*

JAHAN KHATUN (1326-1416?) Daughter of the king of one of Shiraz's most turbulent times... Masud Shah; pupil and lifelong friend of the world's greatest mystical, lyric poet, Hafiz of Shiraz; the object of crazed desire by (among others) Iran's greatest satirist, the obscene, outrageous, visionary poet Obeyd Zakani; lover, then wife of womanizer Amin al-Din, a minister of one of Persia's most loved, debauched and tragic rulers... Abu Ishak... cruelly imprisoned for twenty years under the Muzaffarids while her young daughter mysteriously died; open-minded and scandalous, one of Iran's first feminists... the beautiful and sensuous, petite princess who abdicated her royalty twice; one of Iran's greatest classical lyric poets whose *Divan* is four times larger than that of Hafiz's and contains about 2000 *ghazals* and hundreds of *ruba'is,* many influenced by Mahsati.

I wonder... will the world ever be faithful one
day?
I'm in pain... will you heal it, by coming this
way?
What will my life be in a day, week, month?
What's Jahan now to do... when world did it
yesterday?

*

JAMI (1414-1493). Considered the last great poet of the Classical Period (10th-15thC.) Jami is most known for his masterpiece seven *masnavis*

epics... including *Joseph and Zulaikh, Layla and Majnun,* and *Salman and Absal.* He also composed three *Divans* consisting of *ghazals rubai's* and other mystical poems.

For this worn out world, each day suffering,
I did go:
for what is and is not, each night... desiring,
I did go!
Each moment of life that seemed like a world,
to say it simply... futile thoughts... thinking,
I did go.

If we weren't bound by selfishness,
how wonderful:
free from poverty and unhappiness,
how wonderful!
If free of grief by imprisoning self...
we would see Real Self's openness:
how wonderful!

From the above examples it can be seen that the *ruba'i* was used to communicate a wide variety of subjects from the most mystical to the satirical and even the obscene. Today this form is used in Iran and elsewhere to express an unlimited number of feelings and subjects.

A NOTE ON THIS TRANSLATION

In the Persian language there is no 'she' or 'he'... only *'oo'* or the person or object referred to... i.e. 'you' or 'that one'. Most translators wrongly either use 'he' or she' depending on their interpretations. I have not done this. Sometimes the poet is addressing the Divine Beloved (or Spiritual Master or *'Qutub'* in Sufi terminology) and sometimes an earthly beloved, so I make the judgment as to which and either capitalize or not, as in 'You' and 'you', 'that one' and 'that One'.

The Life and Times and Poetry of Mahsati Ganjavi

We know very little of Manisa Mahsati (mah... 'moon', sati... 'lady') Ganjavi's life except that she lived in Ganjeh where Sultan Sanjar reigned (1117-57) and as she was a poet, singer, musician and chess-player at his court she would have known Anvari and other poets there. It is said that her father was a theologian of the city of Khujand and she was born there in 1098 and that after her father's death she and her mother went to Ganjeh where they were finally given a room in a brothel.

She was a court, dervish and ribald poet (perhaps due to her accommodation as a child). She knew Nizami and is said to have been buried in his mausoleum, having died in 1185... although he did not pass away until 1209, 24 years later! She also knew Omar Khayyam, and like Omar composed mainly in the *ruba'i* form and must be considered to have helped revolutionize it. She did compose a few *qit'as* (fragments) such as the following that have come down to us...

Do you want to unite with me?
You hold onto a useless desire!
One cannot even dream of it...
why hold to this useless desire?
Where's breeze one can't access:
can anyone ever win one's desire?

And another...

Would to God that I was that one's thumb-stall,
so on his thumb I might pine away, beyond recall;

whenever he would be shooting that arrow of his
I'd make sure I would myself by it suffer... thrall.
And, when that one would fasten me, O so right,
from that one's lips to grab some kisses, I'd stall.

It is stated that Mahsati composed this poem while watching a Turkish boy shooting arrows. It happened that his thumb-stall overturned and he fastened it with his teeth.

She was also a great *ghazal* poet but few have come down to us. Alireza Korangy Isfahani (see bibliography) states: 'Mahasti Ganjavi is without a doubt one of the greatest *ghazal* poets of the twelfth century... her flow of ideas is very much akin to the kind of composition we find in the *ghazals* of Hafiz and Sa'di.'

A rare example of one of her *ghazals*...

With this sorrowful heart of mine, in tears constantly, I am;
like the flute, used to my own moaning its easy to see, I am.
Other than my two old companions, agony and affliction...
I've no other as a friend in this place where inevitably I am.
Who am I? A madwoman whose soul and heart wants pain
and thinks that death will my ultimate comfort be... I am.
At companions' feet I'm candle burning... I burn, so I live:
beyond that flame that flickers, my last days to see, I am.
Like that bubble I am that all of its life was able to survive
because like it knowing my foundation is water only, I am.
I'm a rosebud withered away that in spring lost its beauty:
my youth's a rose blown away by the wind, a memory I am.
It's only for death that to the Almighty I am praying often:

this is the only thing that looking forward to happily, I am.
For Mahasti no candle like a companion has been found...
would anyone come and mourn me when dead finally I am?

She was a strong influence on perhaps Persia's greatest female poet Jahan Khatun of Shiraz (see following) and Persia's greatest satirist Obeyd Zakani. She was famous and also infamous for her liberated behaviour. She is said to have had many affairs, also with the sultan who found her of interest when after he was about to mount his horse discovered a sudden fall of snow had covered the field and she composed for him the following *ruba'i* on the spot...

For you... Heaven has saddled Fortune's steed
O sultan... and chosen you from all who lead:
now it spreads a silver sheet upon the ground,
steed's gold-shod hooves... mud won't impede.

'Attar, in his masterpiece epic poem of mystical stories of desperate lovers of God, the *Ilahi-nama (Book of God)* that influenced Maulana Rumi to compose his epic *Masnavi* tells the story of her and Sultan Sanjar...

Mahsati the female poet, who was essentially pure, was a favourite of Sanjar...

and even though her face was not moonlike, still the king was very fond of her.

She was in the Radkan meadow one night when Khusrau-like Sanjar retired,

and Mahsati left the king and towards her own tent she then went, to bed.

Now, Sultan Sanjar had a slave, a winebringer perfect in charm and beauty,

and he would often enjoy both of these qualities, that in that one he did see.

Like a hundred others he loved Mahsati's rival, handsome as is the moon:

Sanjar woke up! Not seeing him he went looking for that ruby-lipped one.

Throwing on a nightgown and in anger taking up a sword of Indian make

he entered his tent to find Mahsati beside him, lovingly... in give and take.

She kept singing these words as she was playing the haunting melody:

"I'll embrace you beside the meadow, although tonight with another I'll be!"

Seeing the situation, Sanjar... remembering her words, to himself said this:

"If I rush in with sword I'll scare them to death and both I'll terribly miss!"

Embarrassed, he finally rushed off and went immediately into his own tent,

and after ten days had passed he prepared a great feast, an illuminating event!

Before Sultan Sanjar, Mahsati played her harp, in a very high-pitched sound...

that winebringer was standing near, a cup in hand, eyes upon the ground.

Quoting the line he heard the other night Sanjar casually asked her to sing it:

when Mahsati heard the king she dropped harp from her lap where it did sit!

She started trembling like a leaf, she swooned, her senses caught in a snare;

the king went to sit by her pillow, sprinkled rosewater on her face and hair.

When finally she was conscious again... her fear returned of Sultan Sanjar,

after ten times fainting and recovering she still couldn't lose her great fear.

Then the king said, "If you're afraid of me, your life's safe, you're your enemy."

She said, "I don't fear that, but this: one night I practiced that line continually,

all night through I repeated it... sometimes I liked it, sometimes I did not:

now I am reminded of that night and the world is closing around me like a knot.

It seems that one night while I was doing this, you were secretly watching me:

if you seize me or send me away your heart will revolt and back... be calling me.

And even if you should go and be killing me while I am still a healthy woman…

all you would really be doing would be only freeing me from existence's prison!

The reason I'm so afraid is because that King Who is the world's supporter

is with me each moment of my life and sees every moment that I'm the doer!

And if God that Almighty King happens to confront me with all of my

secret thoughts of say… a hundred years, then what shall I do or say, or try?"

As God sees one always, both night and day; be happy, and smile while

like a candle, you are burning and do not breathe a single breath… while

you're not thanking Him… and do no not breathe a breath in forgetfulness:

if you try to thank Him you will receive reward from His Bountifulness.

She finally married (some say was the mistress of) a son of a preacher, the poet Taju'd-din Amir Ahmad and she found little satisfaction in their torrid relationship and so composed among others the following *ruba'i*…

I'm Mahsati and I'm most fair of those to be had:

I am famous for my beauty from Irak to Meshad.

Preacher's boy, you're nothing but useless… bad:

if I get no bread, meat or prick, I get really mad!

Her husband's reply was said to have been…

My prick does not always do what I tell it to:

it's not like your pussy… taking anyone's too!

Weaving a sack out of wool any idiot can do…

but, wind will heighten a tower… is that true?

Her purported love affairs are told in the works of Jauhari of Bukhara.

After nearly 900 years, Mahsati is highly respected for her courageous poetry that condemned religious fanaticism and prejudices, hypocrisy and dogmas.

In the city of Ganjeh in Azerbaijan, a street and a school, an academic institution, a museum and others have been named after her. A monument to her was erected in Ganjeh in 1980.

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RUBA'IYAT...

To be a winehouse regular and a *kalandar,**

lover too:

being in a gang of friendly *rends* *... drunken

outsider too,

to be one who is infamous before creation...

Creator too:

is, than wearing any hypocrite's cloak... far

better, too.

**Note: Kalandars are lovers of God who have given up attachment to desires and live only for God. The name comes from a Master named Kalandar Yusuf. The word means 'pure gold.' Kalandars are continually on the move and care nothing for their own condition, as they are only concerned with praising God. *Rends are drunken outsiders, reprobates, mad lovers.*

In the street of the winehouse, I am a...
dervish;
from that barrel of wine give me what I
wish.
Child of a Sufi I am... but, no infidel,
devilish:
I'm master of none, my own servant to
punish.

Get up... come, my chamber I've made
beautiful,
and for you I've spread a carpet, O so
wonderful!
Come; join me for *kebab* and wine I've made
from heart and eye, for you to eat until
full.

The bazaar of my heart with Your fair-trading
is happy,
with Your beautiful rook, chess of my longing
is happy.
In square of checkmate, You always place me:
O Soul, who with a checkmate, everlasting…
is happy?

You should not in vain rain tears from your eyes, I
believe:
this grief I have is enough, in heart you should not
grieve.
You are beloved, your occupation's not to weep…
I'm a desperate lover: let me work, let me my goal
achieve.

Ever since these eyes of mine did happen to see
your eyes;
sleep fled from my eyes, far from, unfortunately,
your eyes.
You, whose eyes the sight of all eyes make bright,
never did my eyes see others like their majesty...
your eyes.

From both these eyes, these tears, endlessly
are coming,
they, for you who cease to love... effortlessly
are coming.
Careful you've respect for these tears of mine,
for from this heart's *Kaaba*... caravans to me
are coming.

Prayer, when many gods are in the heart:
what good is it?
Antidote, after poison is far in the heart,
what good is it?
To display virtuousness after having a clean
garment over some dirty scar in the heart,
what good is it?

For you... Heaven has saddled Fortune's
steed
O sultan... and chosen you from all who
lead:
now it spreads a silver sheet on the ground,
steed's gold-shod hooves... mud won't
impede.

Unless Your hyacinth, ambergris is quickly
spreading,
morning breeze from bag... musk will not be
spreading.
If a hundred-year-old ascetic sees Your hand...
don't blame me if he asceticism is no longer
practicing.

May *rends* cheering be rending winehouse's air
constantly,
and the fire from their cries catch onto skirts of
austerity.
May Sufis' patched coats, blue woolen cloaks,
fall off to lie under the feet of all dreg-drainers,
immediately!

Drunkenly, your Turkish eyes are… waking
up:
from wine in wine-lovers, delirium is coming
up.
As you rise, allow your hair in air to dance...
from you sitting, a hundred riots are starting
up.

That one, smitten by your beauty,
has returned:
one, for union with you, thirsty…
has returned.
Clean cage, toss seeds of kindness:
this broken-winged bird you see…
has returned.

Since in the world of love my heart became a
king
it was freed from not believing and also from
believing.
I saw my lower self as obstacle on my path…
when I came out of it, my way for me was
opening.

My eyes are only ocean of tears…
sorrow:
my burden a mountain never bears:
sorrow.
Desiring friend… precious life passed:
I want companion… all there is, is
sorrow!

In the winehouse bowing before a beauty
is good,
praying over a goblet of wine, truthfully,
is good.
Not: worshipper showing off his rosary,
is good.
In winehouse, girdle of Magian to see...
is good.

Each moment pain to one needing
keeps coming
from you: cruelty to one suffering,
keeps coming.
In killing of lovers, do not try so hard:
careful, harm to you that's coming
keeps coming.

In the orchard last night I was moaning,
grieving:
as I walked... tears over my body I kept
shedding.
The red rose was appearing, her skirt was
tearing,
and all her blouse with my tears she was
spoiling.

When that one takes from off a victim, another
knife,
between sweet lips and teeth that one puts the
knife.
If that one holds it against victim's throat again,
the joy on that one's lips give to victim another
life.

When ruby-coloured tears from my eyes

keep dripping,

water from stone's heart and sky's eyes

keep dripping.

When they're from you cut off, my eyes

keep dripping:

from the cut, blood... obviously my eyes

keep dripping.

I am a drunk and of the drunkards...

a slave:

I'm far from ascetics and of libertines

a slave.

I'm of moment winebringer comes, saying...

"I can't, be free to join the drinkers!"

A slave.

Any one who desires a love, that is… full of
grace,
at midnight in blood soaks prayer-mat, any
place.
Haven't you heard? Lovers have pitched love's
tent… beyond where seven heavens turn in
space!

Does night know anything about how lovers are
suffering,
how from that goblet of calamity those lovers are
sipping:
how grief will be killing them, if the secret they're
hiding,
and if it they're revealing, the people them will be
killing.

A lover must go and risk one's life in love's
way:
and, turn upside-down heart's peace, every
day!
When one witnesses that Beloved is satisfied...
with suffering heart one dies, as one can't
stay!

With your face your hair is in such harmony
I'm afraid I'll start blaspheming out of envy:
O graceful one... I'll bow to that breeze that
from your face takes your hair... completely!

This body of mine has a heart full of ecstasy
inside...
it also has soul with a thousand flames to see,
inside.
When day and night I'm longing for your face:
I have two eyes full of streams flowing freely,
inside!

All of those nights that in love with you I slept,
are gone!
You've left me and all what I told you to be kept,
are gone!
You were soul's friend... you were my heart's peace:
you disappeared and those tears that you wept,
are gone.

This affair of mine, beyond dry lips and wet eyes
did pass;
your cruel arrow through my heart and soul flies:
did pass.
To me fire of your love was like water in shallows…
but, when I stepped into it, it then over my eyes
did pass.

A mine of rubies… a hiding place, the pussy
is:
it, for you a place to rest, a silver pillow settee
is.
Nine months gone… quicksilver sperm left in it
is sprouting a moon that full of a face, lovely,
is!

As his wife was pregnant a judge was shouting,

crying:

he said aloud and out of spite… "What is really

happening?

I'm old… prick's head hasn't in ages been raided:

my whore is no Mary… who caused her to be

showing?"

If two days ago wind helmet of the narcissus was

raising…

then, a day back armour of the violet, down it was

throwing.

Today from water lily of the valley's sword, it took:

tomorrow… out of the rose's fire a shield it will be

making.

My heart is in your sad place, lonely too
it now is…
of your face rose is servant, whatever hue
it now is.
Water flowing nightly from my eyes turn
millstones, except your stony heart: true
it now is.

These eyes that were always working at seeing
you
are now drowning in tears, don't let them this
do!
And this heart that only had one occupation…
you:
is now caught in your hair's lasso… so to it be
true!

O you, whose face puts to shame the *huri* and

pari... *

and from which the sun, light has borrowed...

constantly;

from desire for your face and from it far away,

today I've thousands of tears on my face, you

see?

*Note: A huri is a beauty of Paradise in female form and a pari is a beauty in male form.

The cloud that blood keeps raining,

is grief for You:

poison that no antidote is having,

is grief for You.

What thousands full of grief never

in hearts or souls are experiencing,

is grief for You.

The cloud that raindrops is scattering
is grief for You...
like that which leaves one wondering,
is grief for You.
Although on fire me You are placing
is grief for You,
I'd be sad if what I was not having,
is grief for You!

Since before Time this heart was place of nesting
of Your Love...
for all of Eternity this soul of mine is the dwelling
of Your Love.
My soul and my heart I love because this heart has
Your brand on it and on my soul is sign, showing
of Your Love.

If, as it is said... that I had a thousand lives to
live,
before You each one I'd place... I would to You
give.
You asked: "Do you have heart for separation?"
Listen, if I'd one, I would have to try to be co-
operative.

If blood didn't continue to be flowing from these eyes
of mine
Your secret I could keep from this heart full of distress
of mine.
And if my breathing was not so cold and face so pale
I'd hide Your secret from heart... and soul, I stress...
of mine.

You shed such blood with those eyes, bloodthirsty,
of yours
and led astray many hearts with that hair, unruly,
of yours…
may God throw some mercy into your heart, so that
you may pay back those poor lovers, eventually…
of yours.

I'm Mahsati and I'm most fair of those to be
had,
and I am famous for my beauty from Iraq to
Meshad.
Preacher's boy, you're nothing but useless…
bad:
if I get no bread, meat or prick, I get really
mad!

That butcher boy, as is his usual way of doing
it,
threw me down, killed me, said, "I'm having
it!"
Then as an apology, he puts his head on my feet:
this, is to blow air under my skin, to be flaying
it.

**Note: This describes a method of skinning goats and sheep by butchers.*
This poem is also attributed to the great Sufi poet
Sana'i who died in 1131 and would have met her at court when
she was 33 and would have been a big influence on her.
He also composed ribald ruba'is.
See my 'Ruba'iyat of Sana'i' New Humanity Books, 2012.

The world is on fire from what is in hearts
of ours...
the universe's confused due to hateful darts
of ours:
look at the goblet from which we drink water...
it is from kin, whose dust the earth imparts,
of ours.

Your cheeks are envied by rose and jasmine,
beloved
your flirting glance upsets men and women,
beloved.
On the way I found, like graceful running water,
water is running from my eyes again, again,
beloved.

As my darling sat down beside the vein-opener,
vein-opener rose and of his hands was the tier…
as the sharp lance of his vein became the piercer,
see, from crystal's mine a ruby spring, a shooter!

Offering up prayers to idols in the temple
is uplifting;
praying, using a large winecup that is full,
is uplifting.
To say rosary upon hypocrisy's carpet never
is uplifting:
sacred thread worn in tavern is worshipful,
is uplifting.

There is a ditch that before that butcher is
lying...
every moment fresh blood into it keeps on
flowing;
how could blood like mine be of value when
to that one a thousand unjust murders, are
nothing?

Even at the point of an arrow, stopped…

I can't be,

and also in a gloomy cell kept, confined…

I can't be:

although tied by chain of your loving glance,

remaining inside of this house, chained…

I can't be!

Ah no… around your roses thorns have been

growing;

like a crow has come and in its beak a tulip is

taking.

Your chin bright as quicksilver… is tarnished,

and the vermilion of your ruby lips all lustre is

losing.

O breeze, I would give my life for a message
delivered,
if you pass where that one born of a *huri* has
resided…
say, that upon the way, throwing her precious
life away out of love for you… Mahsati you
discovered.

How could I ever tell what my love for you,
did to me:
what your heart full of deceit, hypocrisy too,
did to me?
The night, it should be as long as your long hair,
so I can tell to you what separation from you
did to me.

O king… praise and eulogy is all I can be offering
to you:
prayers from a humble woman are enough to bring
to you.
I am no cow and horns are not meant for me to have;
were I one, two horns would be what I'd be giving
to you.*

*Note: The custom of drinking wine from horns.

The very core, the substance of my life… has passed
away:
meaning… beloved's curls from these hands slipped
away.
I dyed my hands with *henna* for sake of my beloved:
but, as I went to sleep my sweetheart, quietly… fled
away.

Time, it has decided this… that for as long as it
may,
it won't let my heart's desire happen, even for a
day.
Heaven determined… around Earth it will revolve,
to make me pass through misfortune with no
delay.

Who could the thief be? When the house he's
entering,
from fear through the windows the house is
escaping…
the house is fleeing and the thief for goods is
searching,
after the house has gone all those goods he's
seizing!*

**Note: This is one of her famous 'riddle ruba'is'. The answer is the thief is a fishing net and the house is the water.*

O son of the preacher of Ganjeh, take this advice of mine,*
sit on the throne of pleasure and hold tight the cup of wine:
God is indifferent to devotion, and to transgression;
so, however it is in this world, to your heart's desire resign.

*Note: This poem is written to the son of a preacher, the poet Taju'd-din Amir Ahmad... whom she either married or became the mistress of... see her life etc., introduction.

I discovered that one, lying drunk... upon the way:
I fell at that one's feet; that hand in mine I did lay.
That one does not remember any bit of this...
that is, I don't remember but that one does, today.

I am a new blooming rose that no thorn is
having,
or a warbling nightingale that its grief is
sharing,
or falcon with seat on hands of monarchs,
that has fallen into Your trap: well, it be
keeping.

Book in one hand, holding winecup in other
are we;
now to faith and now to heresy, as a turner,
are we:
both frail and fickle, heaven's canopy under,
are we;
absolute heathens, perfect Muslims, neither
are we.

That your promise was quite fuzzy,

I knew:

that it would be broken… trust me,

I knew!

This wrong, my friend, that so unjustly

you lately did to me, O so early…

I knew!

To be sucking your ruby lips, forever,

I am longing,

to with you take wine in sips, forever,

I am longing.

Whether intoxicated, mad or sober… to

hear harp from your fingertips forever

I am longing.

You are a butcher to me, while in your love, burning
am I;
that your knife may reach these very bones… trying
am I.
Your practice is to sell whatever you have butchered…
heaven's sake, if me you kill, don't sell me: begging,
am I!

Like some feeble bird, without feathers and wing
I am,
caught in a trap, no one knowing my suffering…
I am:
an illness has been attacking this heart of mine…
and so, today, terribly afflicted, crying, wailing
I am.

Each night from loving you another torture, suffering
am I;
each night, instead of sleep, with eyes, tears flowing,
am I.
When your narcissus eyes snatched my sleep away…
than what is wilder than your wild curls… dreaming,
am I.

O Beloved, I'll not stoop low for you…
even not for one, superior to you, too!
I'll not even at Jamshid look, it's true:*
in water I'll lie, never get wet through.

*Note: Jamshid is a king of ancient Iran.

It's true… drunkards, winehouse frequenters
we are,
neither devotees, nor any hermits, nor seers,
we are.
Judge drinks no wine, fears it: theft in tavern
beats orphan-robbing… not making smears,
we are.

In the snare of love there's none as grief-stricken
as me:
due to your torture there is none as heart-broken
as me.
There are many who are falling in love with you:
in faithfulness, there is none as true, I say again,
as me.

More fresh than Merv's tulip is that son, of the

muezzin... *

put to shame the pheasant's blood has that one's

complexion:

when fame of that one's graceful stature spread...

then cypress stood, as though in prayer... in the

garden.

*Note: One who calls the people to prayer.

It is love that makes the wild lion tame...

and it is from the ocean that comes again

a wonder: now like soul-refreshing friend

it acts, now like blood-thirsty foe, insane!

Like a horse... you gallop sprightly in the field of joy,
with subtle ingenuity you do wonders, not being coy;
with queen, king, pawns, clergy, castles, knights...
you play excellently and elegantly, skillfully, my boy.

Careful... or you may come into a winehouse most profane,
unless you act like a *rend*... there, nothing you will attain.
Here is path of *rends* * not caring if they're criticized:
they're unafraid: unless you risk your life, you can't gain.

*Note: A rend is a drunken, outcast true lover of God.

Wine cup one of our hands holds, a *Koran* the other…
we're sometimes awake or we're in a drunken stupor!
Who are we really in this world that is so frail?
We're not a Zoroastrian, not a real Muslim either.

Wind through the hand for what exists is all remaining…
because everything is immutable and has an ending.
Remember, that all that exists is not really existing…
and what isn't existing, it's as though it's something.

When in need don't wait for help from another…
O heart, a withered reed they'd never offer.
Stinginess creates beasts, thrift is the sustainer…
so if you become poor, don't be a big spender.

Nothing stops us: moment's fate, arrows at us…
not even wild longing, our hearts to hold, to truss.
My soft braids were steel chains in your heart:
but could a chain hold me if I wish to roam, thus?

There's a world for those who mines of jewels
desire...
poets desire a different world, their throne is
higher.
Bird eating love's magic grain is on a plane,
finer...
nests beyond both worlds; of riches, fame, a
scorner.

All columns in your house, and all bricks seen,
are from heads of kings, fingers of some queen.
And each bit of earth where your cattle graze,
from hair hiding cheek of fair beloved has been.

From when we climbed pinnacle, love minaret,
we've known no words but love's... passionate.
None should cross love's threshold, our home:
its hearth is ice cold, love's fiery grace too late!

This is my heart, it is what love that is true,
means...
love that brings me pain like others... it, too
means.
This poor heart produces each sigh and bitter cry:
this, is my heart... this is what love of you,
means.

I happened to see a man on the road, yesterday,
swinging the rod he had as he went on his way.
Some slave of a wife of his, he beat furiously…
those passing watched without sign of dismay.

Winehouse is museum of brave, hall of notoriety…
none here who are low or mean may the inside see.
All who set foot inside here must pay due respect:
in here, none by deceit one may find… believe me.

If Egypt, China, Byzantium all belong to
you,
then it follows that all the world you own
too.
Your life make happy, for in the end your plot
is a sheet and hole into where you they
threw.

When tying the knot a man to a woman is tied…
in God's eye this is good, a law… true and tried.
The knot of marriage, is tying me to my *ruba'i*…
is there a faith that would make me so inspired?

As if in a daze, lying by canal in a field you're
dreaming…
O moon-faced angel, willow-thin, over stream
bending.
Down hill I come bathed in sunlight direct to you:
O lovely one, do not think for water I came…
hurrying!

From your hair, such a pleasant fragrance
comes…
morning breeze takes it up, to it dispense,
comes.
If an ascetic sees your charms as we embrace…
can he bear dryness, and not to his sense
comes?

The rose said, "Before I had time to open these
eyes,
before joy's berry I'd plucked from life's earthly
paradise...
I was plucked by hands to take my scent's essence:
may hands also be cut from life... cut down to
size."

On green grass the rose grows in quiet ecstasy,
nightingale sings out song, a fervent rhapsody!
Each in bliss, forgetting how the spell began...
rose in its brief life, nightingale in grief, lonely.

O my love, come, press your tender lips to
mine;
bring me back to life, so from your love like
wine
I can… blind drunk, be clay within your hands,
and to know world's woe or not I won't
incline.

Though you, crowned head, may be lord of
all,
one day you may cry from poverty… take a
fall.
Let folk move heart, be near them, love them…
fear the day you will need help, them you'll
call!

Nothing can bind us: moment's pull, arrows accuracy,
no mad nostalgia that seizes our heart with a frenzy!
Though my braids turned into steel to anchor in your
heart... could chain keep me at home if I wish to flee?

Your curls are long... like all my sorrows
are,
you treat servants well but still my woes
are!
My eyes, your beautiful eyes are not loving...
no balm from me they needing, it shows
are!

When from these eyes, tears… rose-coloured

fall,

afterwards thousands more, colour of blood…

fall!

This heart has been burnt in the fire of your love

and though it's burnt, blood does still indeed

fall!

Rosebud-like arrows the flower was growing

to with your beauty, beloved, be competing!

When from far off your face's sun took blade,

it… arrows shields destroyed by penetrating!

Arrow from ready bow of that dark Turk fired
away,
its target in heart of unworthy lovers will hit,
anyway.
That one is the kind of Turk who is alert enough
to two eggs in the dark night be juggling... his
foray!

All in this city, men and women, see your
face,
and from fire and grief and you... danger
face!
All clothing in a year your father sells is less
than what daily they tear off, due to your
face!

O Ganjeh's chief preacher, my advice be
accepting...
sit upon joy's seat and a brimming cup be
holding!
God doesn't have a need for guilt and bowing:
with wine and a pretty one heart your be
enlivening!

Situated in south-west Iran, Shiraz in the 8thA.H./14thA.D., century, famous for its gardens, wine, poets and beautiful women, almost miraculously was spared the atrocities and genocide that the Mongols had committed in most of Persia in the previous century. The depth of depravity and cruelty of the Mongols towards the Persians has probably not been equaled in all of known history.

Some historians claim that Shiraz was built from the ruins of Persepolis, and others state that it was founded by the Arabs at the time of the Muslim conquest. Other traditions claim that Shiraz was built on the site of a city named Fars or *Pars* (which became the name for the province, *Parsa* becoming 'Persia') and was named after Fars who was the son of Masus, the son of Shem who was Noah's son.

Incidentally, Noah the great Spiritual Master, is known to have been a vintner and after his ark landed on the mountains of Ararat in the nearby land of the Turks he brought his family there and planted the grapevines he brought with him... some say he founded the city almost ten-thousand years ago and Shiraz has become famous for the grape that bears its name.

The three wise men or Zoroastrian Perfect Masters *(Qutubs or Magi)* are said to have set off from Shiraz to go to Bethlehem to recognize the Christ *(Rasool)*. Persepolis was built some 2500 years ago near Shiraz, dedicated to the Spiritual Master Zoroaster who settled near there some

eight thousand years ago... although most scholars say 2600 years ago... but they confuse him with the last priest that bore his name.

Shiraz was a famously beautiful city, known for its variety of markets, being on the trade route from Europe to the Far East. All of the agricultural produce of Fars came to the capital, which was a bustling, lively city. The grains, vegetables, fish, fruit, honey and of course wine were known all over Persia and elsewhere. Each market and bazaar had its own specialty... and craft and art flourished in Shiraz before Jahan and Hafiz's time as it did then. The gold and silverware and the beautiful books with their fine miniatures were bought by rich patrons for their libraries and palaces from Shiraz's workshops.

During the time that Jahan and Hafiz lived there was a change in the art of miniature painting in Shiraz due to a new way of looking at the world that they and others brought about, that led to the great masterpieces appeared later in Tabriz and Herat and elsewhere. Shiraz was also an important centre for the buying and selling of Persian carpets and cotton goods, cotton being grown in the valley. Because the city was a cosmopolitan centre on the silk-road many merchants pass through from the known world bringing not only merchandise but also news of distant, fascinating lands.

Shiraz and its outer villages were about twenty miles in circumference with a population of about 200,000 souls with the population in the central city behind the walls being nearly 60,000 and the area there about five miles in circumference. It was a cosmopolitan city with diverse peoples arriving constantly from all over the country and from foreign places.

Shirazis spoke many languages apart from Persian: Turkish, Lori, Arabic, Hebrew.

Ibn Battuta the traveler from Tangiers, whose book *Rihla* or 'Travels' is now compared to that of Marco Polo... and who Jahan and Hafiz probably met, passed through Shiraz twice and described the city as follows... "Shiraz is a densely populated town, well built and admirably planned, well-known and has a high place among cities. It possesses pleasant gardens and far-reaching streams, fine streets and excellent markets. Each trade has its own bazaar. Its inhabitants are handsome and clean in their dress. In the whole East there is no city that approaches Damascus in beauty of bazaars, orchards and rivers and in the handsome figures of its inhabitants, but Shiraz. It is on a plain surrounded by gardens and orchards and intersected by five rivers, one of which is the stream known as Ruknabad, whose water is very sweet and excellent to drink, very cold in summer and warm in winter and gushes out of a fountain on the lower slope of a hill called al-Qulai'a. The principal mosque of Shiraz, which is called the 'old mosque' is one of the largest of mosques in area and most beautiful in construction. Its courtyard occupies a wide expanse paved with marble and is washed down every night during the summer heats. The leading inhabitants of the city assemble in this mosque every night and pray the sunset and night prayers in it. On its northern side is a gate leading to the fruit market which is one of the most admirable of bazaars and to which I for my part would give the preference over the bazaar of the Courier Gate at Damascus.

"The people of Shiraz are distinguished by piety, sound religion and purity of manners, especially the women. These wear boots and when out

of doors are swathed in mantles and head-veils, so that no part of them is to be seen and they are noted for their charitable alms and their liberality. One of their strange customs is that they meet in the principal mosque every Monday, Thursday and Fridays to listen to the preacher, sometimes one or two thousand of them, carrying fans in their hands with which they fan themselves on account of the great heat. I have never seen in any land an assembly of women in such numbers."

Hamd Allah Mustaufi wrote in his book *Nuzhat al-Qulab* in 1340 about Shiraz as it was when Hafiz was twenty and Jahan was eighteen... "The city of Shiraz has seventeen quarters and nine gates... the city is extremely pleasant to live in but its streets are very filthy, hence it is impossible for any one to go about in these streets and not be defiled. The climate is temperate and here all trades may be followed. At most times sweet-smelling herbs are available and are sold in the market. The water is from underground channels called *qanats* and the best is from the conduit of Ruknabad... but the biggest *qanat* is called Qalat Bandar that runs under the tomb of the poet Sadi, which never needs repair. During the spring floods the rivers rush down from Mount Darak and passing outside the town flows off into Mahaluyah Lake. The crops are of medium produce and very often go up to famine prices. Of fruits, the grapes known as *mithqali* are excellent. The population are lean and brown-skinned; they are Sunnis of the Shafi'ite sect; some few being Hanafites and there are also Shi'ahs. Further there are many great *sayyids* of noble lineage here... who hold the Traditions of the Prophet and as traditionalists they are for the most part excellently esteemed. The people of Shiraz are much addicted to holy poverty and they are of strict orthodoxy... so that they

are content to do but little trade. Hence there are many poor folk, though they refrain from begging, and do not fail to practice some means of livelihood... while the wealthy folk are mostly foreigners. Hence few Shirazis are very wealthy, and most of the people strive after good works and in piety and obedience to the Almighty have attained a high degree of godliness. Never is this city devoid of saintly persons, for which reason it was also called the Tower of Saints... but indeed, at the present day, it should rather be called the Robbers' Haunt by reason of the lack of justice and bold greediness that is too common here... The revenues of the city go to the Treasury, and at the present time they amount to 450,000 *dinars*."

As for the previous seven hundred years Shiraz had been ruled over by non-Shirazis and in the past two hundred by those of Turkish or Mongol origin the population had accepted the idea that they were born to rule over them and the ruler of Shiraz, Mahmud Shah at this time, though not Turkish himself, had a Turkish wife Tashi Khatun (the mother of his youngest son, Abu Ishak, and close friend and a mentor of Princess Jahan) who was greatly loved and influential in her own right. She endowed many public buildings including a college... and often paid her respects at the tomb of the Spiritual Master Ibn Khafif known as Shaikh-e-Kabir who was credited with having brought Sufism to Shiraz four hundred years earlier.

Junaid Shirazi the poet and historian of Shiraz who died some months before Hafiz, wrote in his book on Shiraz about the shrines of the many Saints and Spiritual Masters who had graced this place with their presence and where Shirazis weekly or even daily went on pilgrimage. This was usually a surprisingly joyous and relaxed occasion with a picnic-

like atmosphere and a chance to socialize with family and friends. There are many important pilgrimage shrines apart from that of Shaikh-e-Kabir that is in the northern Darb-e-Istakhr quarter.

An understanding of the multi-layered and interlocking and often conflicting structure of Shirazi society is essential to the understanding of the story of Shiraz at that time. On top was the ruler and although he was in power he usually did not directly control the everyday goings-on of the city. All of that was designated to officials such as the minister for police, tax-collectors, bazaar regulators, who were appointed by the prime minister. The prime-minister's life was often shortened if he antagonized in some way his master or if the king was deposed.

As the king and his prime-minister's power and responsibility usually covered much of Fars and not just Shiraz, it was necessary that the chief-judge become an important head of this ruling class who acted in the king's name but was also understood to be the representative of the ordinary citizen and thus was the bridge that could be crossed in either direction as in the life of Shiraz's much loved Majd al-Din who saved Shiraz on two occasions and like succeeding chief-judges were sent on important peace missions to other rulers by their kings. Even the nobles of the city would pay them daily visits to judge family matters. The ruler and the chief-judge could criticize each other but rarely did, as each was greatly dependant on the other.

The group that was most powerful and influential amongst the nobles were the fourteen hundred *sayyids* or descendants of the Prophet who received from the government yearly stipends. The Shirazi *sayyids* controlled much wealth in the city and did so by endowments of colleges

and individuals and events. Such wealth and power also meant they were somewhat independent from the ruler and their ruler, their *naqib,* like the chief-judge wielded much power upwards and downwards.

Apart from the ruler, chief-judge and *naqib,* the various trade guilds leaders and neighbourhood groups were of much importance in how the city functioned. The king had to have the support of such organization's leaders or bosses who had the responsibility to keep order in the bazaars and seventeen quarters and if the city was under siege they oversaw the battlements and security of all the gates. These bosses tried to control the street ruffians, young so-called 'heroes' and gangs that were potential mobs that could be for or against the rulers.

Under these chiefs were the common workers who could easily join the mobs in the street if the occasion arose and the ruler was hated. Some were ridiculed by the nobles and called drunken rogues and reprobate-outsiders *(rindan),* ruffians and no-hopers but such young men saw themselves as heroes *(pahlavan),* and believed in the lore of chivalry and their groups welcomed and fed and housed strangers and gave protection to the weak and vulnerable when violent times befell the city. Hafiz and Jahan were always identifying themselves with the *rindan* but their *rindan* belief was more about an inner philosophy of rejection of the outer forms of hypocritical society and religious dogma and rituals and a freedom to reject reason in favour of love and divine-intoxication.

Apart from the chief-judges, leaders of the *sayyids* and the bosses of the guilds and neighbourhoods there was another group who wielded great power although they were not appointed by the ruler. These were the shaikhs and their families. The shaikhs were the head-preachers and Sufi

leaders, such as the powerful black-magician Shaikh Ali Kolah who claimed he could control the *jinn,* and was a deep and dangerous thorn in Jahan's and Hafiz's sides for over thirty years.

Shiraz during the fourteenth century contained more than five hundred mosques and colleges *(madrassas)* and Sufi retreats and other religious foundations endowed by the aristocratic, wealthy, old, established families who were as a social group the most powerful and of whom the Baghnovi, Fali-Sirafi, Alavi-Mohhamadis. The famous chief-judge Majd al-Din who was revered by all Shirazis was from the Fali-Sirafi family. Most of Shiraz's religious establishment came from fifteen or more noble families.

Shiraz for some time had been under the benign administration of Mahmud Shah Inju, who was said to be a descendant of the Court poet and mystic Ansari of Herat. Mahmud Shah (Jahan's grandfather) was appointed by Amir Chupan Salduz the chief-commander of the ruler of all Persia, the son of the Mongol khan (king) Uljaitu who had ruled from the majestic capital he built called Sultaniyeh near Zanjan south-east of Tabriz and Sultan Abu Said succeeded his father Uljaitu in 1317 at the age of twelve.

Mahmud Shah was sent to Shiraz as the tax agent to administrator all the personal holdings of the sultan, and because of his mastership in this control of the finances of Fars he received a fortune for himself of an income each year of at least a million *dinars.* He had become independent and powerful in Fars with the exception of some of the mountains and plains of the province where robber bands still raped, murdered, looted and plundered.

As the years passed and the young sultan, Abu Said, became embroiled in a power struggle and intrigues at court, the taxes that were supposed to come from Shiraz (the second richest city in his kingdom) dwindled. Mahmud Shah seized the opportunity and used the taxes to protect the city by building many large brick-works with tall towers that were used as lookouts. The bricks of rammed-earth were baked then carried to rebuild the tall, thick wall that had been constructed over 300 years earlier that surrounded the city and was of 12,500 paces. He also cleared the moat that had been added at the turn of the century. He dropped some of the many taxes and helped the city's poor and the poets and artists and because of his generosity he and his family were greatly loved by the people. Mahmud Shah returned to Sultaniyeh, the newly built Mongol capital near Tabriz, and left the governorship of the province of Fars to his three oldest sons Masud Shah... (the father of Jahan), Kaikhosrau and Mohammad. His youngest son was the handsome and popular Abu Ishak (the same age as Hafiz) who would eventually succeed Masud Shah and become her and Hafiz's patron. Kaikhosrau, the second eldest son was put in charge of Shiraz in 1326 when Jahan was four and Hafiz six.

In 1334 Mahmud Shah and his oldest son Masud Shah... Jahan's father (who was at the time with him at Sultaniyeh) were relieved of their positions by Sultan Abu Said for supposedly enriching themselves and not passing on all the taxes to him. Sultan Abu Said replaced Mahmud Shah with Amir Muzzafer Inak, a Mongol officer. In fear of losing his wealth and power Mahmud Shah decided to kill his rival and with his followers chased him to the palace walls at Sultaniyeh wherein Amir

Muzzafer sought refuge with the sultan. The palace was then attacked. Sultan Abu Said was enraged by this but Mahmud Shah's great friend the prime minister Ghiyath al-Din Rashadi intervened on his behalf and while many of the conspirators were executed Mahmud Shah was imprisoned in Tabarak castle in Isfahan and Masud Shah in Anatolia. The sultan soon sent Amir Muzzafer with many soldiers to take power in Shiraz and take hold of the treasury and all revenues... which amounted to 10,000 silver *dinars* a day. Amir Muzzafer was preparing to send to Sultan Abu Said what was left in the treasury but before he could do that Masud Shah's second oldest son and governor of Shiraz, Kaikhosrau, had him arrested and packed off with his men back to Tabriz.

After Amir Muzaffar's soldiers were ordered back to Sultaniyeh, Sultan Abu Said feared an invasion by the Khan Uzbeck of the Golden Horde... and that left Kaikhusrau in power until Masud Shah returned after being released from prison due to the influence of the sultan's prime minister and he was welcomed back by all Shirazis and a sullen Kaikhusrau, who was not liked by the population, had to allow his older brother to take the reins of power. Masud Shah decided after talking to his beloved step-mother Tashi Khatun and his brothers in Shiraz that it was probably a good time for him to go to Sultaniyeh and beg Abu Said to release his father still in prison in Isfahan.

He left his brother Mohammad in charge while he was away on his mission that all Shirazis prayed to be a success, as they loved his father dearly.

He finally found Sultan Abu Said on the battlefield with Sheikh Hussein, who greeted Masud Shah quite warmly. Masud Shah asked

Sultan Abu Said for a note to allow him to go and procure his father's release. Abu Said talked with his advisors and returned and said, "That is impossible. But I offer *you* governor-ship of Shiraz and Fars like your father once possessed, but unlike him you must *pay* due homage to me... and I mean *pay*, not become a thief like your father became." Masud Shah replied, "Whatever my father did he did for the city of Shiraz, Fars and *all* of its people who he loves so dearly and not for himself... he always lived a simple life and believed in love and not hurting others. It seems to me from your problems at the moment and from rumours I hear about *your* prospects in the near future that there is no reason why I should pay any allegiance to you when I have the full support of my family and my people. Unless you release my beloved father I will return to my people and declare myself sole ruler and you can send another army to take Shiraz as before, but this time we will be ready for you... but I can't see you doing that in the foreseeable future. So, I must take my leave and bid you farewell... I do not think we will be meeting again." And with a slight bow he left and began the ride back, but on the way back he was talked into calling in on a friend at the court at Sultaniyeh. This friend told him that a little over a year ago Sultan Abu Said had a very interesting visitor, Mubariz al-Din Muhammad Muzaffar, the ruler of Yazd.

He, like his father, ruled from the fortress Maibad near Yazd. His father died some twenty-two years earlier and the thirteen-year old Mubariz took over and even at that age was said to be a fierce and brave warrior. He made Maibad his capital some four years later, ruling from a large fortress there. Around the same time the administrator of Yazd, Atabeg Yusuf Shah, was giving the king, Uljaytu, many headaches and

Uljaytu confessed to his soon-to-be successor, his son Abu Said that he would like to find a way to get rid of him. So he invited Mubariz to his Court and gave him Yazd to placate him.

Mubariz secretly visited Sultan Abu Said and the adoring ruler conferred upon him the title of Amir Zada... 'birth by king'. Later the word leaked out that Kirman and Shiraz were mentioned by 'Amir Zada'.

When Masud Shah arrived home in Shiraz his treacherous brother Kaikhusrau, who had become addicted to power, convinced the soldiers that had remained at home to support him... and, when Masud Shah entered the castle he was arrested along with his brother Muhammad, and Kaikhusrau declared himself the new ruler.

At the end of November that year, 1335, Sultan Abu Said's wife, the famously beautiful Baghdad Khatun, went to him on the battlefield, slept with him and after they had sex she wiped his body with a towel impregnated with a deadly poison. It was rumoured she was jealous of the attention he was paying to her young, beautiful rival Dilshad Khatun. Afterwards Baghdad Khatun was murdered in her bath, the Greek slave named Lu'lu who had become a powerful amir, beat her to death with a club.

Arpa Khan, the nephew of Hulagu Khan the king before Uljaytu, Abu Said's father... after being appointed Sultan, sent an order from Sultaniyeh to Isfahan's prison to remove the head of Shiraz's beloved ex-ruler Mahmud Shah. A number of the amirs didn't approve of what Arpa did or of his ascension to the throne and they set up a rival sultan in Musa, a true descendant of Hulagu... and not just of his brother. Musa promised that if he defeated Arpa in the coming battle he would allow the

sons of Mahmud Shah to peacefully go to Tabriz and collect what was left of the body of their father and return it to Shiraz for a proper burial. Fearing the wrath of the Shirazis who loved his father and believed Masud Shah to be his rightful heir, Kaikhusrau allowed his brothers and his father's favourite wife, the much-loved and respected Tashi Khatun, to travel with him to collect the body and return it to the grieving population.

Two years later in 1337 Kaikhusrau made the mistake of executing the good friend and ex-minister of Masud Shah, the Amir Fakhr-ud-din Phirak, which was the last straw as far as Masud Shah and many others were concerned. Jahan's father, the rightful heir to the throne, disappeared down one of the *qanats* and escaped to Isfahan where that city's most powerful people were loyal to him... and where he assembled a sizable army to take back his beloved city. On returning and laying siege to the city the people rose up and some generals and a good number of soldiers left their posts and joined him. Kaikhusrau was soon captured and quickly executed.

Hafiz was then eighteen years old, small and ugly, and working in a drapery shop and studying at night when this occurred. His father who was a coal-merchant from Isfahan had died when he was seven and he and his mother who was from Kazerun were left destitute and were forced to go and live with his uncle, Sadi... who considered himself a poet like his famous namesake, Sadi of Shiraz, who had died about fifty years earlier and was still the most popular poet in the city. He and another Master Poet, Nizami, had greatly influenced the young man with such a remarkable memory that by the age of eight he had memorized the whole of the *Koran*... and Sadi's poems, and hence Shams-ud-din took Hafiz as

his pen-name (one who knows the *Koran* by heart). He was determined to emulate his hero and had gained some notoriety with his poems in praise of the new king that he had read to mild applause in the various teahouses he frequented. These poems had come to the attention of the king's prime-minister, the wealthy and much-loved patron of the arts, Khwaja Haji Kivam... and so Hafiz received an invitation to read them at the gathering of poets *(musha'irah)* during the king's New Year's garden party... an event that Masud Shah had decided to revive, being a lover of wine, music and poetry as was his father.

Also invited, along with many of Shiraz's esteemed poets was a new arrival in the city who had recently come from the upheavals in the court at Baghdad and had taken up a teaching post at one of the colleges, the thirty-eight year-old Obeyd Zakani.

Even today, nearly 700 years later, Obeyd Zakani is a controversial figure (some of his so-called 'obscene' works are still banned in Iran). But, he is considered Iran's greatest satirist, social commentator and a remarkable poet of profound mystical verse. When he arrived in Shiraz his reputation preceded him being the author of *Prodigies of Aphorism,* a compendium of wise sayings composed while at the court of Sultan Abu Said. He had been born in the village of Zakan near Qazvin and was of lineage connected to the Prophet. In Qazvin he held a teaching post then a judgeship but became disillusioned by the corruption and the class-structure in government of that city and eventually found his way to Sultan Abu Said's court where he gained some success as a poet and social commentator. But, on arrival in Shiraz he had found little interest in his serious writings and being a natural comic and satirist decided that

the role of court-jester might be the way to get a finger into the royal purse-strings. He states in this *ruba'i...*

In arts and learning don't be clever like me:
or like me, by the 'great', hated you will be.
You want plaudits from such a time as this?
Musician, drunkard, or shameless beggar be!

And in another...

Sir, stay clear of knowing, if it happens that you stay,
or you will lose the pittance that you will get today;
play the fool and learn well the skills of... the fiddle,
upon great and small you can then... will-fully, play!

At this poetry gathering came together for probably the first time Iran's greatest mystical, lyric poet, Hafiz; its greatest satirist and social commentator, Obeyd Zakani, and its greatest female poet Princess Jahan. Jahan's father, Masud Shah proudly introduced into the gathering of Shiraz's most important poets his sixteen year old daughter who was petite and extraordinarily beautiful and already somewhat too liberated for the upper-class nobility that were shocked that this mere slip of a girl had the audacity to consider herself as a poet... a problem that she would encounter for the rest of her life as she states in her Preface to her large collection of poems, "I composed poems all day long. Sometimes untalented and lazy people teased or found fault with me. Only some people are able to compose poetry. If composing poems is so bad we wouldn't have so many poets. At first I thought it wasn't a good occupation because it was disapproved of and not liked in the society that I lived in. After sometime I realized that our Prophet Mohammed's

daughter composed poems and other women too, including his wife Ayesha. I began to compose poems everyday... it became my pleasure."

Obeyd, who had a reputation already as having a roving eye for beautiful members of either sex (the younger the better) was immediately under her spell and began composing poems about her...

One more time... my head I'm losing:
with my heart, once more I'm playing.
She, is a princess... and I'm ordinary:
she, is a queen... and now I'm begging!
Lithe figure and long braid like a lasso:
queen of beauty, my heart she's ruling.
Her eyebrows are wide like a bent bow:
waist slim: dark, magical: she's lying!
A charming flirt, graceful and straight
like cypress: a juggler, she's cheating.
Without her, I have no light from sun:
no her... no purity in world I'm seeing.
Place where her ruby lips start to smile
sugar loses all of its value, I'm saying!
In my heart always, never from mind:
when with her... lovingly I'm talking.
Going to her is like going to a doctor:
relief for my aching heart I'm hoping.
Everyone complains about an enemy:
only of this friend... I'm complaining!
If Obeyd's eyes get a real look at her...

her from all calamities I'm protecting!

Princess Jahan was already quite proficient in composing the simple four-lined *ruba'i,* but it was the more complicated *ghazal* that fascinated her and which led her to ask her father to find her a teacher of this form that at the time was being sung at Court and in the markets and winehouses, the most popular compositions being those of Shiraz's Sadi and the great Nizami.

This form of poetry which Hafiz and Jahan nearly always used and which they loved more than any other is pronounced *'guz'el'*. Hafiz perfected this form and revolutionized it to such an extent that it is said that most *ghazals* written in Persia afterwards were either poor copies or became so involved in the form that they lost meaning and originality.

There is really no equivalent to the *ghazal* in English poetry, although as Masud Farzaad, the great Iranian authority on Hafiz says, the sonnet is probably the closest. As a matter of fact, the *ghazal* is a unique form and its origin has been argued about for many centuries.

Some say that the *ghazal* originated in songs that were composed in Persia to be sung at court before Persia was converted to Islam, but not one song has survived to prove this. It is also possible that originally the *ghazals* were songs of love that were sung by minstrels in the early days of Persian history and that this form passed into poetry down the ages. This explanation is plausible for the following reasons: firstly, the word *ghazal* means 'a conversation between lovers.' Secondly, the *ghazals* of Hafiz, Sadi, Jahan and others were often put to music and became songs, which have been popular in Persia from ancient times until now.

Whatever the origin, by the fourteenth century the *ghazal* had become a mature form of poetry. Among the great *ghazal* writers of the past were Nizami, Farid ud-Din Attar, Rumi, and Sadi; but with the *ghazals* of Hafiz and Jahan this form reached its summit.

Obeyd would have offered his services in regard to teaching her this poetic form but it was the small and ugly young Hafiz that attracted her for this position, even though his *ghazals* at that time could not be compared to those of the much older poet and were in fact quite pedestrian copies of his hero, the great Sadi. With Hafiz there would be no romantic complications, both she and her father understood. He was hired on a small stipend with Masud Shah asking his chief advisor Khwaja Haji Kivam who had already seen a poet of promise and a remarkable 'memorizer' in the young Hafiz, to look after the details.

It would be two years before an event would occur that would make Hafiz and his eventually remarkable *ghazals* the talk of the city and lead to a friendship between the two young poets that would last all their lifetimes. But her relationship with Obeyd would be a strange and stormy one, often swerving between contempt and fascination and lust and jealousy. This *ruba'i* of Jahan's was probably about the later short time physical aspect of their relationship...

My loved one, calming my heart down is:
they all tell me that he... an ugly clown is.
He may not seem to be beautiful to others,
but to me he is and beside me lying down is.

Her father the king, Masud Shah, having recently experienced the treachery of his brother Kaikhosrau was ripe for even false rumours at

his Court about possible seditious actions of his second youngest brother the hapless, but faithful Mohammad. He let his paranoia get the better of him and without telling Tashi Khatun, his father's wife who was the mother of his youngest brother Abu Ishak, and who was greatly revered by all the brothers and especially Jahan and all of the people of Shiraz as a loving, intelligent and saintly soul... he had his brother arrested in the dead of night and sent to prison in the castle-fortress at Safid. When news spread throughout Shiraz that this had happened his popularity took a sudden plunge but... after all, he was their king and perhaps his brother was up to something?

Fearing the growing power and ambitions of the fierce fighter and ruler of Yazd, Mubariz Muzaffer, he sent his youngest brother the handsome and brave and poetry-writing Abu Ishak to take some of the army to Yazd to 'persuade' Mubariz to agree to annex his holdings to that of the province of Fars and accept governorship under Masud Shah. After much bloody fighting and negotiations Mubariz signed an agreement to accept this, but as Abu Ishak informed his brother on return he was a most untrustworthy soul and a tough opponent of incredible strength and bravery.

After a little over a year of imprisonment in the fortress of Safid Masud Shah's brother, Mohammad, escaped and made his way to the camp of Pir Husain the Chupanid, known by all not only to be ambitious but quite ruthless. Possibly Pir Husain sent someone in there to free him, then he could march on Shiraz with a 'legitimate' heir to the throne and there were still many in Shiraz who felt Mohammad was terribly wronged by his brother. For two weeks in 1339 Masud Shah and the people of the

city stood up to Pir Husain and his army even though his troops outnumbered them. After losing half his soldiers Masud Shah sent a message to Pir Husain and his brother Mohammad that at noon, in two hours, the gates would open and they could march into the city to the palace and that he would be gone. He escaped with a few guards and advisors down a tunnel that lead from the palace to one of the larger underground *qanats* that took them well beyond the outskirts of the city and to safety. Masud Shah's mother and his daughter Jahan decided to stay and hide out among the people. Masud Shah fled to Lauristan to find someone powerful to help him to try to take back Shiraz.

Within a month the hapless brother Mohammad was executed by Pir Husain and then he had the youngest brother Abu Ishak and his mother the much loved, courageous and beautiful Tashi Khatun dragged through the city to be then taken to Tabriz to be questioned about her husband's wealth and property. The people rose up, this being the final insult (after the senseless death of Mohammad) and freed them after she pleaded to the population in the name of her much-loved husband. Most likely Hafiz and Obeyd Zakani were involved in this revolution that eventually led to the populace attacking the palace and Pir Husain fleeing the city after losing many of his soldiers and much of his claimed booty. The Shirazis were a fighting and gallant people as will be often seen!

Pir Husain returned to help out his cousin Sheikh Hasan Kuchek defeat Hasan Borzorg in Tabriz who returned his help with an army to take back Shiraz and joining this army was that of the dangerous Mubariz Muzaffar of Yazd who now had eyes for the main prize, Shiraz... and the whole of Fars.

With Pir Husain gone Jahan's father Masud Shah simply marched back into Shiraz and resumed his ruler-ship. But his ease did not last long. On hearing of the size of the armies of Pir Husain and Mubariz that were heading for Shiraz he fled to Baghdad and took refuge with Hasan Borzorg! Chess has nothing to compare with the moves in this royal game!

The Shirazis fearing the vengeance of Pir Husain and the reputation of the ferocious Mubariz Muzaffar closed the gates and held out bravely against the huge armies for fifty days! Knowing they could not last much longer and their opponents had fared worse than they thought they would, the people called on their revered chief-judge Majd-al-Din Isma'il to leave the city and broker a peace with the invaders. This he wisely did to everyone's advantage gaining a promise from Pir Husain to overlook the city's previous relationship to him and to act kindly towards its people. Pir Husain rewarded Mubariz with the city of Kirman.

An uncomfortable but workable peace settled on the city by 1341. Hafiz was now working in a bakery at night and studying most days, and had learnt to get by with little sleep. He had become skilled in jurisprudence, had learnt all the sciences, including mathematics and astronomy. For many years he had been studying the great Persian poets and the lives and works of the Spiritual Masters. He was fluent in Arabic and Turkish. It is most likely that one of his teachers was Obeyd Zakani.

Early one morning at the bakery a worker who delivered the bread was sick, and Hafiz had to deliver to a certain quarter of Shiraz where the rich, ruling Turkish upper-class lived. Outside a mansion Hafiz's eyes fell upon the unveiled form of a young woman who was standing on a balcony.

Her name was Shakh-e-Nabat... meaning 'Branch of Sugarcane'. Nabat's unique beauty immediately intoxicated Hafiz and he fell hopelessly in love with her and almost lost consciousness. He could not sleep or eat. He began to write *ghazals* inspired by her.

He heard she had been promised in marriage to Abu Ishak, the exiled (now ruling Isfahan with the help of Malek Ashraf, brother of Hasan Khucek and cousin of Pir Husain) handsome and talented youngest brother of Jahan's father, the exiled Masud Shah... and realized how hopeless was his love. Still, the vision of her beauty filled his heart and his thoughts were constantly with her. Then one day he remembered the famous 'promise of Baba Kuhi'. Baba Kuhi was a God-realized soul *(Qutub)* a Perfect Master-Poet who had died in Shiraz in 1050 and had been buried four miles from Shiraz on a hill named after him. Baba Kuhi had composed a *ruba'i* that had summed up Hafiz's position perfectly and gave him some hope...

Wherever a heart has blood flowing from it, I see it.
Crazy for hair of moon-faced ones? I admit I see it!
That particular Essence... the same in both worlds,
in moon-faced ones looks, pure, exquisite... I see it!

The promise that Baba Kuhi gave was that if anyone could stay awake for forty consecutive days at his tomb he would grant them the gift of poetry, immortality, and his heart's desire. Hafiz, interested in the third, vowed to do it, and... he'd had plenty of practice in not sleeping. He finally achieved this and was directed to the Perfect Master Mahmud Attar.

A year later in 1342 Abu Ishak joined his army in Isfahan with Malek Ashraf's and on hearing of this Pir Husain decided to attack them there but he was beaten, and afraid of Mubariz Muzaffar, he decided to seek refuge with Hasan Kuchek his cousin, who immediately executed him. So much for family ties again!

On advancing on the now wide-open Shiraz, Abu Ishak convinced Malek Ashraf to let him enter the city first where the Shirazis embraced him and took up arms against Ashraf attacking his camp by night and sending his men packing. While this was happening, unbeknownst to Abu Ishak his remaining brother, Jahan's father Masud Shah had entered into a pact with a Chupani commander Amir Yaghibasti (Malek Ashraf's uncle!) and had entered Shiraz. Abu Ishak immediately yielded to the rightful claim of his older brother and left for Shabankareh.

Now was Jahan's chance to approach her father about re-appointing Hafiz as her poetry teacher. He agreed as did Hafiz who weekly went to the palace to give her lessons and their budding friendship began to bloom as did the interest in her of Obeyd and her in the crazy poet, joke-teller and unofficial Court jester. Hafiz complained in the following humorous poem while at Court to Masud Shah that he had been paid for the past three years by Khwaja Haji Kivam while Masud Shah was exiled but that now that he had finally returned and should take over paying him suddenly the money had dried up!

But the situation was soon to change again! Yaghibasti, like Pir Husain before him couldn't bear sharing power and on a fateful day in 1342 as Masud Shah left his bath Yaghibasti had some of his men stab him to death. On hearing of this treachery Abu Ishak was soon to react.

He contacted many of the nobles, guild-masters, gang bosses and neighborhood leaders who agreed to join forces with his men by opening the gates to them and attacking Yaghibasti in brawls that lasted in the streets of Shiraz for twenty days! Once again the Shirazis had been underestimated by a ruler. It is certain that Hafiz, Jahan who had left the palace on the death of her father and Obeyd all joined in the fighting. Soon the ruler of Kazeroun joined his forces with Abu Ishak's... Yaghibasti and his soldiers fled. Incredibly, a year later Yaghibasti and Malek Ashraf united their armies with Mubariz Muzaffar's and murdered and pillaged their way towards Shiraz, but... upon hearing of the death of the head of the Chupanid family, Hasan Kuchek, the two Chupanids stopped their advance and headed for Tabriz and possible power there and Mubariz, disappointed, returned to Yazd. So, in 1343 the talented, brave, handsome youngest brother, Abu Ishak, the son of the much-revered Tashi Khatun, the beloved step-mother of Jahan, to whom Nabat had been promised in marriage but whom she rejected (having fallen in love with Hafiz) now had undisputed power in Isfahan and Shiraz and would do so for most of the next ten amazing years.

During the reign of Pir Husain Jahan had renounced her status of royalty and had lived the life of an ordinary Shirazi and had loved the freedom and liberating effect on her as a woman of the upper class. She had frequented and drunk in many of the winehouses run by the Zoroastrians and Christians and was treated as an equal by the dozens of poets, minstrels and musicians of the city who performed there. They included the now-popular Hafiz, Obeyd, Haydar, Ruh Attar, Junaid Shirazi and a recent arrival from Baghdad and Yazd the famous Court

poet Khuju Kirmani who soon, much to the chagrin of Obeyd became Abu Ishak's official Court poet, while Obeyd had to be content with being a jester again, who delivered satire, obscene jokes and an occasional mystical ghazal.

One of the greatest influences on Jahan at this time, and before this time, was the infamous female poet Mahsati who specialized in the ruba'i and lived in Ganja in the 12th century, during the time of the great Nizami. She was notorious for her liberated views and actions but especially for her 'obscene' ruba'is that also appealed to Obeyd who composed many of his own. She finally married a son of a preacher, the poet Taju'd-din Amir Ahmad whom she had (like Jahan would soon discover with her 'great love') found little satisfaction in their torrid relationship... and so she composed the following:

I'm Mahsati and I'm most fair of those to be had:
I am famous for my beauty, from Irak to Meshad.
Preacher's boy, you're nothing but useless... bad:
if I get no bread, meat or prick... I get really mad!

Here are some of Mahsati's non-obscene *ruba'is* that could easily have been composed by Jahan and obviously when one compares them to hers, they had a profound influence on her, as did the tragic life of the female poet of two hundred years earlier.

I am a drunk and of the drunkards... a slave:
I'm far from ascetics and of libertines a slave.
I'm of the moment winebringer comes saying,
"I can't, be free to join drinkers," I'm a slave.

Any one who desires a love that is full of grace...
at midnight in blood soaks prayermat, anyplace.
haven't you heard yet, lovers have pitched love's
tent beyond where seven heavens, turn in space!

Does night know anything about how lovers are suffering,
how from that goblet of calamity those lovers are sipping:
how grief will be killing them, if the secret they're hiding
and if it they're revealing, the people them will be killing?

A lover must go and risk one's life in love's way:
and turn upside down heart's peace every day!
When one witnesses that beloved is satisfied...
with suffering heart one dies, as one can't stay!

With your face your hair is in such harmony
I'm afraid I'll start blaspheming out of envy:
O graceful one, I will bow to that breeze that
from your face takes your hair... completely!

This body of mine has a heart full of ecstasy inside...
it also has soul with a thousand flames to see, inside.
And when day and night I am longing for your face...
I've two eyes full of streams flowing freely... inside!

All those nights that in love with you I slept... are gone!
You've left and what I told you must be kept... are gone!
You were soul's friend and you were my heart's peace...
you disappeared and those tears for I you wept are gone.

This affair of mine, beyond dry lips and wet eyes did pass:
your cruel arrow through my heart and soul flies, did pass.
To me, that fire of your love was like water in the shallows
but, when I stepped in to it, it then over my eyes did pass.

Abu Ishak re-appointed as chief minister the wise and wealthy and respected Khwaja Haji Kivam who soon made it clear to the young ruler that Hafiz's brilliance in Koran studies entitled him to teach the same at Kivam's college. Hafiz was summoned to Court and Abu Ishak was amused to see that the man who had won the heart of the most beautiful woman in Shiraz who had been promised to him was small and ugly, but he befriended him immediately... they had much in common, both knew the Koran by heart, both were poets and lovers of beauty.

Hafiz continued to teach Jahan who at the insistence of Tashi Khatun had returned to the palace. An example of how she would take a ghazal of Hafiz's then change it into one of her own can be observed by the following. First the *ghazal* by Hafiz (a much-loved and famous one)...

That lost Joseph will return again to Canaan: do not grieve;
sorrow's cell becomes a blooming rosegarden: do not grieve.
O sorrowful heart, your condition improves, don't despair,
this worried mind will rest peacefully again: do not grieve.
If springtime of life is once more upon the garden's throne,

night-singer, over head rose canopy's drawn: do not grieve.
If for a few days the revolving Sphere doesn't turn our way:
this wheel not always spins in one direction: do not grieve.
Don't be hopeless if you don't understand what is hidden,
a secret game is played behind the curtain: do not grieve.
When from longing for Kaaba you've set foot in the desert,
if you're wounded by the sharp Meccan thorn: do not grieve.
Heart, if the flood of death sweeps away life's foundation,
when in this torrent Noah is your Captain: do not grieve.
Although journey's stage is perilous and the goal not seen,
each road will always end at the Destination: do not grieve.
Though we're separated from Beloved, troubled by enemy,
God causes and changes our every situation: do not grieve.
Hafiz, in your corner so poor, alone through dark nights...
while you're praying and reading the Koran: do not grieve.

Now, Jahan's *ghazal* that was influenced by the one above...
O my bewildered heart, from this world's sorrow, do not grieve:
world's condition goes up today, down tomorrow, do not grieve.
If this world's hurricane threw you into the blazing fire of love,
if your honour is upon the ground or even below: do not grieve.
And if you happen to live life like Jacob in the house of grief...
that lost Joseph will return again to Canaan, so do not grieve.
Every day seek and do not be hopeless about God's kindness,
people who have hope find what they hope for, O do not grieve!
If your aim is for the Kaaba do not turn off from desert's path,

depend on this suffering, in thorn-bush don't go. Do not grieve!
Pain from that One's better than His healing: sit, be patient!
If you cannot find a way to heal heart's sorrow, do not grieve.
For in the world there is no trust... so might as well be happy:
water comes back to the dried-up river... and so do not grieve.
O gardener, best wait, be patient with this trouble with crows:
nightingale will return with a frenzied oratorio... do not grieve.
Jahan, how long do you want heart to suffer due to this world?
Your life settles down, if not today, tomorrow. Do not grieve!

Many of her poems from now on were about one who was to become really the first and great tragic love of her life... the newly appointed minister of Abu Ishak, a brilliant, handsome but vain and womanizing young man from Jahrum, south-east of Shiraz, Amin al-Din Jahrumi. She was besotted by him and his long black hair from the moment he first appeared at Court.

My beloved, why in such a vile way keep treating me:
for God's sake tell me why do you treat me so badly?
Please do not be any worse to me any more than now:
I've lost all patience grieving over you, can't you see?
Our grief is killing us... don't let it exceed its bounds:
what is the full extent of the bounds of your cruelty?
I'm in love with your long, black hair falling in braids:
this deserves, that not broken is your promise to me.
I'll go off and start painting my face with my blood,
because... my beloved, you I can't find and can't see.
If someone other than me you happen to be choosing,

I'd still not find another but you to love... obviously.
I told the breeze of your lips and your beautiful hair...
because I want that breeze to bring your smell to me.
I didn't know that caught in the net of your black hair,
I... not being able to love anyone except you, would be.
Thank God that you keep staying in the world, Jahan,
sometimes you can help any poor beggar that you see.

Jahan's name means 'the world' and in many of her *ghazals* and other poems she uses a play on it or uses it as a double-meaning. This makes it difficult for her translators to know whether she is talking about herself or the world at large or both or the world of Jahan or a dozen other possibilities... but this is a part of her genius and playfulness. In the following *ghazal* she mentions how one of Hafiz's appeals to her in her desperate situation where she is being rejected and slandered...

Between Jahan, the world and all in it... is separation:
I am not in fear of my enemy or friend's consternation.
If I'm like a word in the peoples' mouth it isn't strange
because inside the shell is always the pearl's location.
To one who leaves the world with its good and bad...
the peoples praises or slander causes no perturbation.
"If you are simple and pure you will be seeing the Sun:
if the dark night is before you... have no trepidation."

I've placed this couplet by Hafiz in my poem because
this ghazal of his I love deeply... without reservation.
O my friend, I have no complaints about my enemies:
I only complain of friends... with enemy's disposition.

My temperament's garden's breeze is jealous, impure:
I hear it has ambergris scent from a heavenly station.
It could be likened to a bud the breeze easily blows...
and after being blown it's feeling joyful exhilaration.
Jahan, the world's beautiful but don't leave the grass:
place for enlightened ones waits near river's location.

The situation at Court with her displays of love-madness due to her fascination with the uninterested Amin al-Din began to create such a scandal that soon all of Shiraz was talking about her and singing her *ghazals* to him that she would openly read out or sing and dance to during the poetry gatherings that Abu Ishak would have every week where Obeyd would out of jealousy satirize her with his obscene verse and Hafiz, Khaju Kirmani and others try to take the attention away from her.

Tashi Khatun each day became more and more worried about the health of the mind and heart of her favourite step-daughter and finally went to her son to plead with him to talk to Amin al-Din to see if he could turn his eyes at least for awhile in Jahan's direction and away from his many conquests at Court and in the local whorehouses and winehouses. Abu Ishak eventually gave way to his mother's pleadings and convinced his young minister that a short affair with Jahan would put her out of her misery and stop this fascination with something forbidden and unreachable. Their affair commenced and Jahan was in ecstasy. Soon, (being in Jungian terms a 'animus-projector' or 'Don Juan' type) he tired of her and looked around for other hearts to break.

But Jahan was not one to be tossed aside so easily. She poured out her grief and bitterness at his rejection in *ghazals* and *ruba'is* that shocked her

family and all at Court and had all of Shirazi high society talking about the young princess poet who did not seem to 'know her place'... but, the common people felt deeply for her and took her side as they would do for the rest of her life.

Loving you, has broken my heart wide apart...
to explain this any more is not within my art.
I'm always being teased by those opposing me:
I suffer more than usual and grief plays its part.
My family criticizes me, opponents even more:
but they, not my family, feel sorry for my heart!
This broken heart of mine leaves that one alone:
don't imagine he is faithful, for cruelty is his art.
In Jahan is no work, except burning in this love:
everyone in the world must play a grieving part.
I'm sure it would be better if I'd be like a drifter...
the world's King, Jahan, guards a drifter's heart.

She wanted him no matter what and she caused such a uproar that she had been cruelly abandoned and mistreated by him that she forced her uncle Abu Ishak into talking his unhappy young minister into marrying her, a woman he thought to be outrageous and to him a great embarrassment.

At this grand occasion at the palace all the local poets were of course invited and many read loving poems and minstrels like Hajji Ahmed sung *ghazals* to the young couple. Not so the envious and brave (and perhaps foolish) Obeyd Zakani who was still hopeful that she may have got over her infatuation and continue the affair she had once had with him. To the

amazement and shock of all gathered there he recited this obscene *ruba'i* of his as his marriage present to her husband for all to hear, using a play on the double-meaning of her name as she often did, and joking about the petite Jahan in relation to the large minister...

Minister, the world (Jahan) an unfaithful prostitute, is not?
One of your stature, ashamed of such a prostitute... is not?
Go, find a pussy who to be fitting your size is quite able...
fit, for you, Lord of the world, Jahan... who is minute, is not.

It is said that Amin al-Din was greatly amused but not so Jahan or her uncle who had to wait for the laughter and obscene talk to die down before Obeyd received his rebuke. It would take years before Jahan could forgive her old lover for this offence.

At last Jahan was happy for a year or so but Amin al-Din wasn't and his answer to this was to continue to do what he was doing before they were wed. She let out her longing, grief and frustration in many hundreds of heart-wrenching *ghazals* and *ruba'is* that are unique in the depth of human desire and love and despair into which she sunk and gave expression to at Court in readings and song and dance, for she was said to have also been a fine singer and a wonderful dancer.

It must be understood that the upper-class and the royalty of Shiraz were of Turkish and Turkish mixed with Persian origin and hence the women were unveiled and mixed more freely with the males at that time and Jahan saw herself not only as a poet but also as a liberated individual... free of everything but the spell of her love for one who hardly ever saw her.

Many of her poems spoke of how she was laughed at by the nobles and how her husband was off with other woman and how her heart could not stop breaking. But, eventually something good came out of their relationship... she had a daughter, Soltan Bakht, the light of her eyes, whom she praised and mourned in many beautiful, heart-wrenching elegies after her death...

Although the world lied to kings and took their lives too...
kings of the world, Jahan, still desire the world... it's true!
Soltan Bakht's death has killed this world and me, Jahan:
heart of the world of Jahan is burnt up, this one can't undo.

(Notice again the clever play on her name and its meaning).

Hafiz had also married and had a child, a son, but still had a relationship of a platonic nature with his muse Nabat who never married for she had lost her heart to the small, ugly poet and rejected the king, Abu Ishak, who also eventually married and had a son, Ali Sahl, whose life like that of the son of Hafiz and the daughter of Jahan would be a tragic, and not a very long one.

Abu Ishak turned out to be an ambitious and often erratic ruler. Soon after gaining power he set his sights on Kirman and came into conflict again with his arch-foe the brave and brutal Mubariz Muzaffer of Yazd who was now ruling there. In 1345 and a year later he attempted unsuccessfully to take the city. Later in the decade he attacked Kirman again then Yazd but failed both times at a great cost, not only to the city coffers but to his own sanity. He seemed to be suffering from paranoid-schizophrenia and this led to bouts of terrible depression or exaggerated pleasure-seeking in wine and women and feasting. The parties at the

palace became famous for their wildness and long duration and the false Sufis Shaikh Ali Kolah and the false ascetic Abdullah bin Jiri and their thousands of blue-robed followers began to denounce him and what they saw as Shiraz's lawlessness and contempt for 'Islamic ways'. He was too frightened to reign them in and they began to act like a religious police force against the *rinds* and open-minded poets and musicians and Hafiz, Jahan and Obeyd warned of their growing influence. They built a high tower in the city they hypocritically called 'The Tower of Unity' on which they could spy on the population. Shah Abu Ishak's paranoia extended to the people of Shiraz even though they had fought alongside him many times to rid the city of tyrants. He was afraid they would rise up against him and so prohibited the owning of arms except by his Isfahani soldiers and guards. The people began to resent him. His prime-minister Khwaja Haji Kivam tried to reason with him but insanely again he attacked Yazd and this was the last straw as far as Mubariz was concerned, noting that Abu Ishak had broken eight peace agreements with him. In 1352 from Kirman and Yazd the tyrant Mubariz brought troops together and marched on Shiraz where Abu Ishak was now drunk most of the time. The terrible siege of the city lasted six months and it was mainly the starving people that held off the dreaded foe. The neighbourhood chiefs and mob bosses were really the ones in charge of the defenses and when Abu Ishak made the mistake of planning to execute one of them for something imagined the district's boss out of self-preservation contacted Mubariz and opened a gate for his troops to enter.

During the siege Khwaja Haji Kivam died and at the end of it in 1353 Jahan's husband, Amin al-Din, fled through one of the *qanats*

(underground water courses) with Abu Ishak who in his haste to escape left his small son Ali Sahl behind... who was eventually captured and cruelly put to death by Mubariz as was his wife and daughters, and as were many of Shiraz's courageous citizens. The raping, killing and pillaging lasted weeks. Obeyd's most famous poem *Cat and Mouse* is a parable about the battles between Mubariz (the cat) and Abu Ishak (the mouse).

Abu Ishak and his entourage fled to Isfahan where he began to gather a new army to take back the city but a year later Mubariz's sons laid siege to that city and he was brought back and executed in May 1356 in much style in front of Shiraz's leading citizens (Hafiz and Jahan would have witnessed it) on the steps of the main building at Persepolis. His final words were the following *ruba'i* (sadly, the only one that he is remembered for)...

No hope in family or stranger does remain,
the bird of life now has not a single grain...
all that we said throughout our life is gone,
nothing will survive us, but an echo, vain!

As soon as the stern, strict religious fanatic Mubariz Muzaffar had entered the city Shaikh Ali Kolah and his followers had rushed to his side and offered their services in closing the winehouses and brothels and drug dens and policing Islamic law on the point of death. Obeyd fearing the worst and knowing he would be one of the first to be hunted down, having satirized Mubariz and often Ali Kolah, fled the city in the first week's confusion of murder and plunder.

I'm leaving the land of Shiraz as my life will be taken...

O, because of this unavoidable despair, heart is broken.
I go, beating head with my hands, feet sinking in shit:
what's to happen to me, on this road what will happen?
Now, I cry out like the nightingale that is lost in love...
now, like the heartsick bud, my collar's been torn open.
I leave this city I'm leaving what I have for an unknown
when I go through the city gate... my life it is gone then.
As I leave my Self, heart, friends, Shiraz behind me...
I go on, hopelessly looking back, remembering... when.
There is no strength in my hands left to hold the reins...
can legs go on when strength from them has been taken?
I'm so sick today and heart-aching from the pain of love:
no help wise friends, parents' advice I should've taken.
O Obeyd, this is not a journey that I wanted to make...
Sky pushes me, then the chain of Fate pulls me... again.

Hafiz laments the closing of the winehouses and takes a brave dig at Shaikh Ali Kolah in the following famous *ghazal* of his composed at this time...

O heart, the door of the Winehouse maybe they'll open;
perhaps the difficult knot of our difficulty... they'll open.
If because of selfish preachers they have closed the door,
for God's sake keep heart brave and happy: they'll open.
By the pure hearts of lovers drunk from the morning cup,
soon the door with love's prayer as the key they'll open.
Write a note of consolation to the daughter of the vine,
that lovers cry blood from grief and see... they'll open.

On the death of pure wine cut the strands of the harp;
it's tangled hair, young magicians quickly they'll open.
O God, they've closed Winehouse door; don't approve,
or the door of lies and deceit and hypocrisy they'll open.
Hafiz, this costume you wear, when tomorrow comes...
they'll tear away, and its cord you will see they'll open.

During the six-month siege Jahan with her daughter Soltan Bakht had hidden out, as before, with Hafiz and his friends. Mubariz, realizing she was the last of the Inju royalty and loved by the people used Ali Kolah's spies to discover her whereabouts and she and her daughter were locked up in the palace, a fate that would befall Jahan for most of the following twenty years of Muzaffar rule! Jahan would bravely complain about this and even threaten Mubariz in the following *ghazal*...

Listen, why to me do not you pay attention...
your prisoner please listen to! Pay attention!
Through the power you have you became rich:
such power made people to you pay attention.
If one day some Persian lady did take your life,
then you'll of crown, status too, pay attention?
You are the monarch now and you have power:
you can do anything, it is true? Pay attention...
don't let the world trick you and don't be proud:
life has its ups and downs, if you pay attention.
I put it all away... my heart, my life: I've ignored
it all in Mubariz's reign. Please do pay attention.
Jahan, in this world how much grief do you want?

You suffer much: to grief, you too pay attention.

And in this *ruba'i* she states precisely her circumstances under the reign of the Muzaffar's... Mubariz, and his more benign son Shah Shuja who succeeded him who on and off for almost twenty years kept her as a prisoner in the palace, only allowing her out to read her poetry and see her friends at certain gatherings, mostly at New Year.

I've nothing, no home, no heart, not a world
throughout this kingdom of the Muzaffars.
Don't be deceived, O Jahan, by this world...
one day's lucky, next unlucky, in this world!

A few years after their imprisonment her beloved daughter died in mysterious circumstances and Jahan let out her bitterness and grief in many heart-wrenching elegies.

O how I regret that I've lost my darling daughter...
my dear daughter's dead, so young when I lost her.
So kind... a face like the moon... but what can I do?
All patience I've lost... kept from her, as a prisoner.
now the nightingale's song isn't heard in a garden:
my beautiful girl cut from the garden, like a flower.
O heart, when will you go to the house where she is?
She left me: with the caravan has gone my daughter.
I cried out so loud even the sky heard my complaint:
tears ran deep... like rain down drainpipe they were.
She was always a girl who had a happy disposition:
why did she die? Did my bad luck transfer onto her?
Darling, Jahan's world was destroyed when you left:

you left a world and Jahan, when you so young were.
She took grief and happiness from the world, Jahan...
she passed away, now of world Jahan is relinquisher.

And in this *ruba'i*...

This misfortune of mine... God has given this to me:
O God, I do not wish anyone else has such a destiny.
Yes... I cannot stop weeping and I keep saying to all,
"O my companions... my Soltan Bakht is lost to me."

Mubariz's son Shah Shuja who had taken control by blinding and imprisoning his father who cut off the heads of hundreds while holding the *Koran* in one hand and his sword in the other was a liberated ruler in the style of Abu Ishak. He loved poetry and was a fine poet and immediately opened the winehouses and drew poets to his court from all over Fars. But even the requests of Hafiz and other Shirazi poets to free the tragic and mourning Princess Jahan fell on deaf ears with him for like his father he knew that she may become the focal point of unrest if she was returned to the people who loved her so much. But, under his rule that continued for most of the years from 1358 until 1384 (his brutal Mubariz-like brother Shah Mahmud deposed him for two years, 1364-6) he allowed her to appear at more functions in the palace to recite her poems and occasionally converse with her friends and in particular her mentor, Hafiz.

For many of these years she kept expecting the return of her long-disappeared husband Amin ad-Din to free her and she composed hundreds of ghazals pleading for him to come back to her but eventually this fascination and desire for him faded and this desire was replaced by a deep longing for a new beloved... the Divine Beloved or the Perfect

Master as can be seen in many of the poems composed in the later years of her life that more and more reflected the point of view of the spiritual *rind* or outsider or the dervish.

O God, please give my afflicted heart some good news...
and do something so those I love... me again will choose.
Take notice of my spiritual views and also of my religion,
victory to my enemies, strangers, friends: nothing to lose!
Heal me with happiness because I am tired of suffering...
make one worthless worthy with Your grace: me peruse!
We cannot find our way without a leader who is wise...
those following be impressed that to follow You I choose.
Shed light, show pleasantly candle of the deceased's face:
to heart's melancholic bird give plumage that will enthuse.
When arrows of an evil event are shot by Fortune's bow...
give my heart and my soul a shield... so that I cannot lose!
On Resurrection Day You forgive sins because of prayers:
forgive all of my sins from my cries at dawn, if You choose.

Like Obeyd (who wrote 'obscene' parodies of the Sufis such as his infamous 'Book of Masturbation' and Hafiz who criticized the 'hypocritical wearers of blue robes') she seemed to reject the role of the 'Sufi' perhaps because of the continuing presence of false Sufi masters like Shaikh Ali Kolah and his many blue-robed followers who continued to make the lives of the more open-minded Shirazis most difficult.

Early on she would compose this witty *ruba'i*...

I swore that him again I would never see:
deaf to temptations of sin... I'd be a Sufi!

Then I knew that it wasn't in my nature...
renunciations are now renounced, by me!

Hafiz was self-exiled for a number of years in Isfahan in the late 1360's because of the false rumours and threats of Shaikh Ali Kolah and certain members of the clergy whom he had openly criticized and Obeyd was unable to return to Shiraz until he was finally invited back by an intrigued Shah Shuja... but Obeyd's sense of humour and honesty rubbed even open-minded Shah Shuja the wrong way and he died in abject poverty in 1373 having one last blast at the doctor who attended him on his deathbed...

To this stupid doctor no one should apply
to be treated... if one doesn't want to die.
Finally the angel of death to him will say:
"That which you sold for years, now buy!"

Eleven years later with the death of Shah Shuja in 1384 she was released at the age of sixty from her prison in the palace and was able to live once again with her friends, Hafiz and the minstrels and the ordinary people of Shiraz who saw her like Hafiz as one of their champions who had suffered much like he had to help liberate their hearts and minds and the city they all loved so much. We do know that by this time the perfect Master Mahmud Attar had passed his mantle of God-realization on to Hafiz and it is most likely that she became one of Hafiz's followers in the spiritual sense from that time and one of his inner circle. Perhaps many of her poems of this later date were written to him in his state of being the Beloved.

It is not worth asking for even one favour from anybody...

You alone in this world give daily bread to anyone like me.
When I came into the world I realized no one is oneself...
it is only the kindness of Yours that rescued us, obviously!
No one finds the right way if one asks an unworthy one...
separate the Friend's way, from that of anyone unworthy.
In all this world there is not one anything similar to You:
come to our rescue with Your grace... and please help me!
In this boundless sea of Yours I am such a small thorn...
and a small thorn can never be found upon top of the sea.

I have read a few reports that during this period Hafiz (who had lost his wife some years earlier) and Jahan married, but while I think this is possible I believe it is more likely that after she left the palace she went and lived with Hafiz... (possibly they married to avoid prying eyes and further controversy).

Hafiz dropped his physical form in 1392 and it is said that she survived him by many years, eventually collecting all her many poems together into a *Divan* and writing her unique Preface to it. Perhaps Hafiz did give her illumination before he passed on, for she was able to state at the end of her life, after all the suffering and loneliness she went through...

Is there a kind of kindness God has withheld from me?
If I could, in a thousand languages I'd be appreciative!
I remember that One in my heart, every day and night;
if I didn't I would hate it, leave it and it... not forgive!
When I'm looking at everything, I'm seeing only God:
my greatest wish is for whatever God, will me... give!

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PREFACE TO HER *DIVAN* BY PRINCESS JAHAN

In the Name of God...

Thanks be to the Almighty for creating human beings with the power of speech and eloquence and grace and oration... for He is the finest of creatures having all of these powers in this world.

God the All-Powerful, created the human from the earth

and the other creatures who all bowed down to Him.

God gave the power of thinking to those who are wise.

God, with special power, created the human form

in the best of possible shapes.

God changed the human body to the best of creatures

so that he may attain perfection.

God created this complete creature to have special attributes.

Sometimes God sent prophets with miraculous powers.

Moses in the cradle was able to speak!

Sometimes God sent a prophet to reveal the happiness

of both worlds to the people.

Only God deserves to command... and those who know

His mystery.

Praise and greeting to God, Mohammed and his descendants.

Mohammed is the source of religious law and during his life

the world was at its finest.

Everyone wishes for recognition in this world and to leave the

world something worthwhile to be remembered by.

When someone dies that one will be forgotten but if that one

leaves a memory in people's minds they never forget such a one.

Poems and literature are the best way to be remembered

in the world.

I am... Princess Jahan, the daughter of Masud Shah

and I preferred... I sometimes had to choose a lonely path.

Don't choose to be alone but also don't choose to open your

heart.

I composed poems all day long.

Sometimes untalented and lazy people teased

or found fault with me.

Only some people are able to compose poetry.

If composing poems is so bad we wouldn't have so many poets.

At first I thought it wasn't a good occupation because it was

disapproved of and not liked in the society that I lived in.

After sometime I realized that our Prophet Mohammed's

daughter composed poems and other women too, including his

wife Ayesha.

I began to compose poems everyday... it became my pleasure.

If mine you will be, it is my pleasure:

and if you kill me, it is my pleasure.

You may never be mine I know but if

you remember me, it is my pleasure!

Composing poems isn't easy... you have to learn

a great many things about it.

I've done my best but if there are problems with my poems,

forgive me.

If I didn't do as well as I could and my poems are not as good

as they should be, then please forgive me.

Please edit them yourself... help me to correct them.

Thank you.

RUBA'IYAT...

As a butterfly, to mate no one as faithful

is:

like butterfly, no one a friend, heart... full,

is.

A predatory enemy may kill a butterfly, but...

until it's dead, butterfly remaining faithful

is.

At morning, I went into the garden full of
pain,
and red rose told yellow about my pain...
again:
although far from me, nightingale cries daily,
"Why is your face yellow from pain's strain
again?"

Flowers fade and to them we should bid goodbye,
or they can be completely left alone, by you and I.
We should think deeply about both possibilities,
then let mind decide where the right way does lie.

I wonder... will the world ever be faithful one day?
I'm in pain... will you heal it, by coming this way?
What'll my life be in a day, a week or in a month?
What's Jahan to do, when world did it yesterday?

Do not worry, your heart the beloved will be
reaching:
a day will finally come when my pain will be
healing.
We should never be losing our hope, or give up
trying:
one day the night of separation will finally be
ending.

There is someone who has your beautiful
eyes…
and your beautiful face, like the sun in the
skies.
Last night I was dreaming of your beautiful face:
no better one than that one, in this dreamer
lies!

O life, do not close your eyes on me so rudely…
do not laugh at vile feelings that come over me.
Open doors of happiness with your generosity:
open them for me, but close them for my enemy.

I had a fortunate destiny…

last night:

ah, you were mine, finally…

last night.

I dreamt I was biting your sweet lip…

I woke: bitten finger to see,

last night.

Look at the breeze, it wants to blow

again…

the garden of the world, put on show

again.

When I looked out at the flowers in the garden

I saw your face lighting it with a glow

again.

In the fire in my heart I am burning:
poor me, all night I am not sleeping.
I am a lover in love with the beloved:
God, help… this problem be solving!

Everywhere I go, I am thinking of you…
being away from you, I am worried too.
Why am I not allowed to see your face:
how long should my heart wait for you?

I swore that him again I would never see:
deaf to temptations of sin... I'd be a Sufi!
Then I knew that it wasn't in my nature:
renunciations are now renounced, by me!

I've hidden your secrets in this heart
of mine:
from eyes, blood drops start to dart,
of mine.
For love of you I became a sacrificed lover:
beloved, to you it is a mere dying art
of mine!

Your handsome face is something I'll never
deny!
That you're taller than a cypress will I ever
deny?
You're beautiful and shine like a large diamond:
O my beloved, your great beauty I can never
deny!

How long should I wait to see your fair face?
I'm bewildered, looking for you in each place.
O beloved, the love of you makes me envious:
fair one, I look for you everywhere... no trace!

Suffering too much is this tired heart
of mine...
think about grief of heart kept apart...
of mine.
Please try to be kind, with your generosity
begin to have some care for this heart
of mine.

Away from you, too much my suffering comes:
I'm sad, and world of Jahan, into grieving comes.
This heart of mine has become like Layla's, that
away from Majnun's madness coming, comes.*

Note: Majnun (about 721 A.D.) which means 'madman' whose real name was Qays, was the famous lover of Layla who came from another tribe in Arabia. Majnun fell in love with Layla when they were children at school together. Unable to contain his love, one day he expressed it and Layla's father, enraged by the scandal of this 'madman' in love with his daughter, refused to allow them to see etch other. Majnun's father, who was the leader of his tribe, tried to reconcile them but to no avail. Layla also loved Majnun. Majnun wandered the hills living with wild animals and composing songs in praise of Layla. Finally their human love became so great that it was transformed into Divine Love by a Perfect Master. Layla became so undernourished from missing him that she finally starved to death. Majnun threw himself on her grave and died there. Their souls mingled with their dust. Many stories and poems have been written about them, the most popular being that by Nizami. See my translation published of his 'Layla & Majnun' and Majnun's own poems published by New Humanity Books 2009.

At all the ups and downs in the world I'm looking:
I see if someone is not affected, that one is winning.
But a person like me is such a miserable one,
I'll be with those with no home that all is losing.

O God, to have a lonely heart, do not let me...
today, don't allow such contempt to beset me.
O azure wheel, for all others a easy horse you provide to ride, but with a donkey you net me!

Stand up, come to the garden... roses grow
together:
not seeing Your face the nightingale grows
quieter.
Why do You sting me, O You... like a bee?
"With my kindness comes my sting," You
answer.

My poor heart by destiny has been treated too
unkindly,
in both worlds except for You no one is kind to
me.
I keep waiting and sitting here in hope's pathway...
come to my rescue because no one else will,
obviously!

I go here and there like a ball that someone else plays…
breath of patience with that one in me no longer stays.
Get up, come… I can no longer endure separation;
hurry, I've been waiting for days and days and days!

Every day you have a different way… a different manner:
the more I look at you the more I think you're even better.
I told myself to take you to court, perhaps I'd get my heart back from you: but judge's heart you'd make flutter!

We have emptied many a full glass of the
wine:
one more time I wish to bring your lips to
mine.
Suddenly... I've felt a great fear for my life for
perhaps without our lips joined my life I'll
resign.

Do you know that I am tulip-lean and liver-
bloodied?
How much can I suffer? Hands off, one so
oppressed!
You stole my heart then tossed it to the wind...
O my life and my world, stupidity's all I've
gained!

My friend, what happened? You never mention me?

By not asking me to come, you never make me happy.

Jahan's objective in this world is only to join you...

so, why don't you answer this desire of mine...

finally?

O source of my cure, you can't sit even one moment

with one when by that one's face affliction is evident?

If I'm loving you with your Farhad-like ways don't blame me: you're sweet like Shirin and I'm indulgent.*

**Note: Shirin (meaning 'sweet') was the beautiful daughter of the Byzantine Emperor, Maurice. She married Parviz (A.D.591) and became the queen of Persia. Parviz invaded Jerusalem and carried away the true cross. A sculptor, Farhad, fell in love with her and she with him. Farhad made an agreement with Parviz that if he could cut a pass through a mountain, he would be given her. After many years he achieved this feat (it still exists) but on hearing this Parviz sent a messenger to tell him that Shirin had committed suicide. On hearing this lie, Farhad threw himself off the mountain. This tragic love story is very popular in Persian legend and poetry especially the version by Nizami.*

The world mean, by being jealous of my peace of mind, is…
if Jahan is in need of a drink, world drunk you'll find, is.
I've no choice, as this cycle takes so long to change,
and it's tied my miserable hands and I know it unkind is.*

*Note: Notice the play on her name 'Jahan' that means 'the world'… she does this often.

This is now spring, the time for flowers to grow:
New Year's upon us… and this is so, it's so!
Be happy, don't worry in this old world of ours:
look at your life… it'll go, before you even know.

In prison are all lovers that love you,

please come:

and they stay, yet you're unkind too...

please come.

You say you're sorry for such cruel behaviour

but you know we'll be forgiving you...

please come.

The rose said, "In the world I'm the most

beautiful,

there is not a tulip that exists that is as

colourful...

I'm not like the corn-poppy, for that miserable

flower with heart that burns away, is so

pitiful."

Late last night I woke my beloved and said
this:
"I can't get to sleep all night, my mind on you
is."
But now that today has finally come I regret
this,
I dreamt this... and my understanding was
amiss.

To the breeze this message was given by my
heart:
"Please tell me... when we will no longer be
apart?
Your eyes are large, shining, bright as the moon:
your hair's so beautiful it will surely trap my
heart."

My loved one, calming my heart down

is:

they all tell me that he… an ugly clown

is.

That one may not seem beautiful to others,

but to me he is and beside me lying down

is.

I'm sorry for all those ones who a friend,

have not:

they a friend to talk to and on to depend

have not.

They've no one to tell grief to, so forgive these

sad people for except for me, they a friend

have not.

I feel sorry for anyone who from their home is

far away...

their friends and relatives they must miss...

far away.

They are like prisoners in some enemy's prison:

they're bored and sad for all dear to them is

far away.

I've nothing, no home, no heart, not a

world

throughout this kingdom of the Muzaffars.*

Don't be deceived, O Jahan, by this

world...

one day's lucky, next unlucky, in this

world!

*Note: The Muzaffars ruled Fars from Shiraz for thirty years
and for twenty or more of those years imprisoned Jahan...
in the palace, being the last of the previous dynasty,
the Injus ... see Introduction on her life and times.*

Nobody but the world, O Jahan... can wear us
out:
each moment new thoughts, night... new ideas
sprout.
Don't be depending on the world for it's unfaithful:
each night it is in a different place, without a
doubt.

O Lord, You forgive all of those who of sin are
guilty,
You decorate the world with Your power, this I
see...
I'm here O Lord, I'm crying in Your sight O Lord:
come to my rescue, You own Jahan's world, and
me!

The only opinion that we agree with… is Your opinion;
no beautiful face but Yours, of them You're the one.
There is no asylum except that home of Yours:
everywhere can be seen Your slaves… by the million!

If only out of this sad place, me You should take…
and out of my heart this sorrow You would take:
in this poor life I've so many problems,
so You kindly away all my problems should take.

Please, do not deprive me any longer of Your kindness,
don't give anymore of this sea of sorrow, give less.
I no longer have a shelter left except for You I confess,
my hope is... that You will not leave me...
nevertheless!

Is there anything that the world does... except oppression?
It will grow a rose in ten days, only thorns from thereon.
It is a very difficult problem that is happening here:
we don't know what Fate does, when will it find solution?

Fate or Fortune... to whom, any attention will be
paying?
To whom... will it some wealth and good luck be
giving?
We can't keep trusting in the vicissitudes of time...
in whose way the thorn of oppression will it be
placing?

The wealth that you have... my fortune
was not:
your pity to my poor heart... opportune
was not.
You know how suitable you were to my heart?
Like flower's life, it a week's honeymoon
was not.

Rose went, so we should now bid roses farewell:
from the world's people you should hide me well.
Corner with book and beloved and cup of wine:
that's what I deserve... I should do it for a spell.

His face from me that one keeps hiding,
every night with the others he is talking.
Sorrow of loving you I can't be leaving,
because to my heart it is still belonging!

O God, please look after me… with Your
Generosity,
for I'm in Your sight with worship's foot to
see…
and if You sell Joseph of Egypt in my palace
then I'm Egypt's Joseph and I'll buy You
willingly.

O God… open Your door and poor me save,
and do not let me of any other be the slave:
I want to obey You and worship only You…
but how? I to any other worship never gave.

I have heard, that the police late last night
arrested a thief by using trickery, outright:
today as he was carried off he shouted out,
"Let me go... you tricked me, it's not right!"

O my Lord, O my God, O my Lord, O my God,
I don't know a way home except Your way, God:
No one can hear my crying in both worlds Jahan,
no one can heal my pain except for One... God!

Please come back; with you bring happiness,

come:

I'm dying from these dreams of you: I stress,

come!

How much separation is for me in Ramadan?*

Please, new moon bringing only happiness,

come!

*Note: The Muslim month of fasting, usually around November.

Beloved, don't pay attention to me for only

one night;

that one only has not made me be happy...

one night.

If I come to you and to me you won't open door,

coming to you over your flat roof will be me,

one night.

O God… please give to me the riches of
insight,
please help me to obey You no matter my
plight.
When I'm in a situation that's dangerous I'll
try to think of You: help me with Your
Might.

O my heart, of your beauty… proud
don't ever be;
be good, far from faith isn't allowed:
don't ever be!
O my heart, our doctor has no mercy for us…
sad about being far from the beloved,
don't ever be.

O God, firstly give to me the gift of belief:
I've pain... kindly heal me, give some relief.
I am so distressed... but I remain obedient:
calm my mind of all this distress and grief.

Just be careful of this world that's so
horrible,
it changed my good nature... to one
despicable:
look at me today... tell me, what am I?
Where went, when I was known as
respectable?

Take as companion all those natural and saintly,
don't be their enemy because of another's policy.
If you wish to be companion of Prophet Solomon,
definitely the tormentor of any ant don't you be!*

**Note: Solomon's Master (Asaf?) appeared to him in the form of an ant. Solomon was about to crush the ant when it spoke to him and made him understand that God was in everything, even an ant, and that the Power of God was much greater than Solomon's power. This was the last lesson Solomon had to learn and so he received God-realisation and it is because of this that the ant was called 'Solomon's steed.'*

It's such a long time that I'm from You far away:
come...
although sorrowful I'm hopeful faith will my way
come.
We've nothing to do with the world, have sat down:
we're poor, in dust of Your palace's floor we stay:
come!

God, I'm humbly praying, in Your sight I'm begging
tonight:
I'll pray silently for what from Beloved I'm needing
tonight.
Problem is heart I want to get rid of it because my heart
keeps on continuing, in fire of love to be burning…
tonight.

I have sacrificed my life for my Beloved…
it's nothing:
from sorrow caused by that One I've bled:
it's nothing!
In this world I, homeless, don't suffer too much.
See how Jahan… head to foot is… dead?
It's nothing.
It's nothing.

Sorrowfully, we keep dying... please a little healing

send:

we have nothing but poverty... please a little caring

send.

O my God, it has come to pass that I am deadlocked...

God, for all our difficulties, please a little resolving

send.

Back... the heart of our beloved,

we don't give:

beloved's heart to others instead,

we don't give.

In love with your face my heart is like a

valuable pearl and to a deadhead

we don't give.

From these times that are passing,

we can't escape;

from world that is us oppressing,

we can't escape.

This oppression is a much easier thing

than ones offensive to be escaping.

We can't escape!

We can't escape!

You come... Your kindness and generosity

I see:

when You come, peace in this mind of me,

I see.

When You are hidden, I see You everywhere...

everywhere I keep looking, You constantly

I see.

I see.

Look at these two roses… O you Persian moon:
one day one like gold, other like firewood, soon.
They are like two lovers that have sat together:
one shame made red, one grief… yellow, moon!

O God, please forgive me with Your generosity…
O God, please don't stop paying attention to me.
Who am I, and who will take my name with him?
If I sin be generous, kindly forgive Your devotee.

With world's grief don't be sympathetic,
my heart;
when beloved is away don't be heartsick,
my heart:
If people should give you advice be careful...
listen to your friend, "It may be a trick,
my heart."

O world, why don't you ever agree
with the people:
why can't you be honest, tell me...
with the people?
Until Jahan was in the world no one heard that
by the world was done this jugglery
with the people.

Shiraz is really wonderful... but especially in
spring
when by river the beloved is with you, wine
drinking;
listening to harp, *daf, kamancheh* and aloes wood:
and all this with your sweetheart whom is so
loving.

There's one who's an equal to that One? There
is not?
In my world a one as wise as You, anywhere...
is not!
All are so weak and we are so small just like ants;
as one existing as powerful as You, I declare ...
"Is not!"

This world, Jahan, is really just like a toy… a
plaything:
each moment's different, something special's
happening.
O little heart of mine when you play… be careful,
for in Beloved's way there are many secrets
waiting.

Growing up in the garden every kind of
flower is:
emerald in desert, plain and valley to
discover is.
Take up cup of yours and come slowly to me:
come, now the time for drinking wine
together is.

The arrow of separation from you has now killed
me…
my heart, it was like a strong shield, now dead it
be:
Doctor saw how mortally I was wounded and said:
"What is wrong here cannot be healed… it is an
impossibility!"

O world, how much misfortune do you want for Jahan?
O my tired heart, of me you should be shy, if you
can:
my life is in no way like the life I'd desired it to be…
and what I got gave no good since my bad luck
began.

That one, was like a painting full of color, full of beauty:
that one, she had a cheek like a tulip, delightful to see.
All desire Jahan has for the world has disappeared…
that one was hidden from the world's people and me.

Does the world want to sew for me a cloak of grieving?
Look closely at me, you'll see that my heart's burning:
my heart that's burning may be a secret you don't know, but I see it clearly… burning, burning, burning!

In spite of the fact that the world to me was no
good,
and flower of garden of my heart took when it
could,
I still saw with my eyes that God with kindness
opened a door of heaven to her… as that One
should.

It was so, whenever I saw a flower I was cheered
up,
I was as happy as when with her I'd drink love's
cup;
but I could never smell her fragrance again because
the world took it from Jahan: I was made to give it
up!

It developed, that she became suddenly scared of
me,
I was told that it was her choice to be away… you
see?
And then it became this: no attention to me she paid.
Mournful sigh of her mother, she did not hear…
obviously.

When you no longer saw me, on my honor… this I
swear:
the patience that I'd borne before I could no longer
bear.
O my darling, how much longer will you be sleeping?
O Jahan's world, wake one more time, wake up my
dear!

I could not sleep for a moment being far away from
her,
and all happening in Jahan's world wasn't peaceful
either;
then all of a sudden I'm informed my daughter is dead:
in Jahan's world I've only now... her, away so much
further.

Being far from you my heart has become like a loaf of
bread:
my eyes instead of weeping tears keep weeping only
blood.
Because I keep being so far from your beautiful face...
my face from my weeping blood eventually turned
red.